

The Homiletical Value of Paul's Metaphors and Analogies and Their  
Application to the Example Stories Utilized in the Context of the  
Contemporary Korean Preaching

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## **ABSTRACT**

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by  
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Effective communication between the preacher and the congregation is a critical element in successful preaching. To be successful, preachers need to consider what makes for effective and helpful example stories, because stories can be a window to the core idea of a sermon. However, many preachers have difficulty finding good example stories when they prepare sermons.

This project examines selected passages in Paul's writings from a homiletic perspective. Paul's metaphors and analogies have some recommendable elements and provide standards for selecting example stories. Paul's marriage and potter analogies in Romans and the planting and running metaphors in 1 Corinthians are excellent examples for contemporary preachers to follow.

Two Korean pastors who are very famous for their impressive and influential sermons also have distinctive example stories within their sermons. There are some commonalities and differences among them. This project examines the value of Paul's metaphors and analogies and compares them with the two Korean preachers selected in order to develop some guidelines Korean preachers can follow in selecting example stories.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### Problem

Although example stories provide a vital resource for preaching, they are sometimes neglected and inadequately prepared by preachers in the context of churches in Korea.

#### The Importance of the Problem

In the Korean language the term “Yehwa” refers to all types of illustrative materials used in preaching.<sup>1</sup> In my preparation of sermons for my congregation in Korea, I often struggled to find good sources of example stories, which can support the arguments and help to develop the direction of my preaching. I was convinced that the effectiveness and persuasive power of my sermons was related to my careful selection of example stories. I also felt that my congregation more easily understood my sermon when I used well-chosen example stories.

There are a lot of different types of example stories such as biblical stories, historical events, episodes, private biography, literature or news features. When used in sermons, the example story functions as a window for the audience to understand the message of the preacher correctly. For preachers as well as audiences, the themes of preaching often need to be demonstrated and reinforced by means of a relevant story. Preachers can achieve their homiletic goals as they persuade their audiences or emphasize their core message by expressing it with the appropriate example story rather than a

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<sup>1</sup> I will translate this term “Yehwa” into English as “example story” in this project. “Yehwa” is the Korean word which originated from the two Chinese words, “Ye” and “Hwa.” The word, “Ye” means example or model and the word, “Hwa” has diverse meanings such as word, story, or tell. This word usually means diverse illustrations which have a role of helping readers’ understanding of writers’ arguments or hearers’ understanding of speakers’ arguments among Korean people.

general statement. If preachers prepare their sermons without example stories, their message can be easily vague making their audience unreceptive to the sermon.

Example stories also can communicate effectively to all congregation members regardless of their educational backgrounds or ages. From children to adults, all the persons in the congregation are interested in story telling of some kind or another. Additionally, example stories can enable the congregation to remember their preachers' sermons for a long time. Even if the members forget the topic or main argument of their preachers' sermon, they rarely forget the well-chosen example stories used in those sermons. People are more likely to be attentive to story telling and to memorize or repeat some of the more impressive stories.

Nevertheless, many preachers do not use example stories effectively. Some preachers often do not consider the congregation's experience and consequently they choose strange and unfamiliar example stories. Preachers need to be taught how to find simple example stories and those that are reflective rather than just informative.

### Thesis

This project will draw on examples in the writing of the apostle Paul and provide an analysis of selected sermons preached by Korean preachers in order to propose an approach to preaching that highlights the use of example stories in sermons.

### Definition of Major Terms

**Example Story:** This refers to all illustrative material used by a preacher in their sermons that employ narrative to present images or experiences and ideas through metaphors, analogies, parallels, proverbs, and legends. Example stories may call forth understandings or behaviors that the hearers are called to emulate or provide examples



that the hearers are admonished not to follow.

### Work Previously Done in the Field

One paradigm of traditional preaching highlights the logical development and explanation for arguing some dogmas, concepts or ideas.<sup>2</sup> More recent scholarship has expressed more and more interest in story telling because of the realization that the recovery of the Gospel means the recovery of story.<sup>3</sup>

Fred B. Craddock is a famous scholar in narrative preaching. His methodology is called 'inductive preaching' which moves from concrete facts or experiences to general truth.<sup>4</sup> Craddock traces the power of narrative preaching to the life and experience of the teller and listener. Craddock states:

To be narrativelike means to have the scope that ties it to the life of a larger community---Narratives reproduce and recreate events, with characters developing and events unfolding, and the teller reexperiencing while narrating. This reexperiencing is the source of the emotive and imaginative power in the telling.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas G. Long is also a famous scholar who has studied story telling or narrative preaching. Long particularly deals with the importance of images, experiences and stories in his book, *The Witness of Preaching*. Long sees some images formed by particular literary devices such as metaphors, analogies or parables as important and active elements in preaching.<sup>6</sup> Long argues that "illustrations represented as various types of stories, metaphors, legends, figures, and analogies can be used as 'specialized tools' to

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<sup>2</sup> Unyong Kim, *Sulgyoe Seroun Paradigm* (A Study of Homiletical Paradigms) (Seoul: Zangrohwe Sinhakdehak Chulpanbu, 2005), 260-61.

<sup>3</sup> Kim, 266.

<sup>4</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Sulgyo* (Preaching), trans by Yongil Kim (Seoul: Concordia Co, 1997), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 137.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Louisville: Westminster: John Knox Press, 2005), 198-200.

make the truth persuasive.”<sup>7</sup> Even though Long emphasizes the role of these particular literary types, Long is primarily interested in their function rather than the contemporary preachers’ creation of them.

Among parables, metaphors, or analogies in the scripture, James W. Thompson particularly tries to turn his focus on the works of the apostle Paul and his essential messages in view of homiletics.<sup>8</sup> Thompson regards Paul’s letters from the viewpoint of sermons in his book, *Preaching Like Paul*, and he finds characteristics which are adaptable to contemporary homiletic discussion. Thompson primarily focuses on Paul’s letters as models providing the needed “missing ingredients” and important insights to our contemporary preaching.<sup>9</sup> He argues that “preachers are inevitably influenced by contemporary models of discourse. Nevertheless, they should recognize the distinctiveness of Christian discourse.”<sup>10</sup>

Brad R. Braxton studies the homiletical, biblical, and theological issues surrounding preaching in general and preaching from texts written by the apostle Paul in particular. Braxton shows how much Paul is interested in narratives and argues that “Paul was a narrative theologian ... Paul’s letters do not simply offer independent snippets of truth or isolated gems of logic. Instead, Paul’s understanding of Israel, the church, and ministry were part of the larger story of God’s dealing with the world.”<sup>11</sup> However, Braxton does not deal with Paul’s metaphors concretely.

One scholar who studies Paul’s metaphors is David L. Williams. Williams

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<sup>7</sup> Long, 200-02.

<sup>8</sup> Reid suggests that the term ‘parable’ “covers a wide range of figurative speech: similitudes, extended metaphors, symbolic expressions, exemplary and true-to-life stories.” Barbara E. Reid, *Parables for Preachers*, v.2 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>9</sup> James W. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 14-19.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson, 144.

<sup>11</sup> Brad R. Braxton, *Preaching Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 50.

devoted his efforts to analyzing Paul's metaphors in his book, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character*, highlighting the historical and exegetical approaches to them. Williams covers all of Paul's metaphors in Paul's letters and carefully investigates the Greco-Roman world and various words or concepts shown in Paul's metaphors. Williams divides Paul's metaphors in his letters into eleven categories using this rubric: Life in the city, Life in the country, Family life, Providing for physical needs, Slavery and freedom, Citizens and Courts of law, Manufacturing and marketing, The business world, Travel, Warfare and Soldiering, Cultic observances, and Public shows and sporting events.<sup>12</sup>

This project basically intends to relate the usage of example stories to contemporary Korean preachers. The distinctiveness of my study is to connect Paul's metaphors and analogies with the contemporary preachers' example stories. In this regard, I accept Thompson's insight that recognizes Paul's letters as fruitful for understanding Paul's preaching. I respect Long's emphasis on the images which metaphors or analogies evoke. I will also consult Williams' analysis on Paul's metaphors, but limit my study to two of Paul's letters: Romans and I Corinthians. Even though Paul's metaphors or analogies are seen as short stories, or images, they might provide a great idea, potential image and impression within them which the contemporary preacher needs to appreciate and apply to example stories in their sermons.

#### Scope and Limitations of the Project

Paul's metaphors or analogies in Paul's letters, particularly, Romans and I Corinthians, can be helpful models for contemporary preachers as they design their own sermons. I have selected Romans and I Corinthians from Paul's other letters, because,

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<sup>12</sup> David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 7-9.

more than Paul's other letters, they contain metaphors or analogies that help me best illustrate their usage for preaching. This project will focus mainly on four passages found in Romans and I Corinthians. This project will also examine example stories in the sermons of two preachers in Korea to find some ideal and effective usage of example stories in the contemporary preaching content. My main reason for selecting these preachers lies in the fact that they have been recognized as effective preachers among Korean preachers and the Korean people.

Finally, I will design a sermon that has effective example stories derived from the results of my study of Paul's letters and the two preachers along with my reflection on the ideal example stories for preaching in the Korean context.

#### Procedure for Integration

The first step is to study some of the goals of contemporary homiletics. Then, I will engage some important issues concerning story telling as well as other important and selected literary forms such as general narrative, parable, metaphor, simile, or analogy.

The second step is to engage the world of the text, particularly Paul's use of metaphors and analogies, and analyze those passages through an exegetical approach. After that, I will evaluate Paul's metaphors and analogies, and find some insights in terms of rhetorical skills that are applicable to contemporary preaching.

The third step is to analyze two contemporary famous Korean preachers to examine their use of example stories and find some valuable insights in each preacher's sermons. After that, I will suggest some ideal example stories which can be effective in Korean congregations.

Lastly, I will design my own sermon to demonstrate the approach to using

example stories in preaching.

The results and reflections obtained to this point will be used to suggest ways that Korean preachers may strengthen the appropriateness of their example stories.

### Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2 will explore the role of storytelling as well as its benefits in preaching by discussing the viewpoints of scholars who study storytelling as well as examine aspects of some story in Scripture. Then, this chapter discusses, defines, and differentiates particular literary types of story telling in the New Testament such as parables, metaphors, analogies, and simile.

Chapter 3 will analyze four metaphors and analogies in Romans and I Corinthians that highlight scholar's understanding of Paul's thought within them related to his theology, mission plan, and so on. This analysis will highlight certain characteristics or particular skills of Paul's writings of metaphors and analogies in order to produce ideas or insights which can be applied to contemporary preaching.

Chapter 4 shows the use of example stories of two well known preachers: Samhwan Kim from the Myungsung Presbyterian Church and Dongwon Lee from the Ziguchon Church. They are known for their great leadership reflected in the extraordinary increase in their church membership in recent years. The purpose of this chapter is to find some commonalities and differences found in those selected preachers' example stories while reflecting the ideas and insights drawn from Paul's metaphors' and analogies' already done in chapter three.

Chapter 5 will highlight the five points of Paul's metaphors and analogies comparing these with two selected Korean preachers' example stories. In this chapter, I

will summarize the value and insights gained from Paul's metaphors and analogies and review how these are reflected in the sermon of two selected famous Korean preachers. I will finally suggest some appropriate and effective usage of example stories to pursue in the Korean context.

Following the conclusion, I will include a sermon I wrote in an Appendix. This sample sermon considers the lessons from Paul in the light of the selected preachers' cases.

## Chapter 2

### Narrative Preaching and Narrative Sources

#### Narrative Preaching

The Bible consists of the collection of small units of narratives. Thus, in the scripture, the preacher has an expansive range of resources for narrative preaching. Joe H. Cothen comments on the benefits of using the resources of the texts in narrative preaching. He mentions that “in narrative preaching, the pastor who sticks to the story at hand is assured variety, because each story is different. In such preaching, departure from the ordinary becomes obvious, and repetition becomes unnecessary.”<sup>1</sup> As he comments, a lot of narratives in the Scripture are never repeated, even though some narratives come from the same source. All narratives have their own characteristics clearly distinguishing them from others.

Cothen also comments on the important reason why narrative preaching can attract an audience. According to him, narratives commonly have “real-life materials.”<sup>2</sup> The Bible stories are not facts to be proven historically or scientifically. Nevertheless, many stories written in Scripture have complete elements which can connect with the experiences of contemporary readers. Stephen Crites emphasizes that “whether stories are ‘about real happenings’ or are purely fictional, they must esthetically reproduce the pulse and density of personal life time.”<sup>3</sup> Even if some narratives’ characteristics are not realistic, the artful skill of storytellers can satisfy an audience’s “sense of reality.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, the preacher’s responsibility is not simply to prove the historical or scientific

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<sup>1</sup> Joe H. Cothen, *The Old, Old Story: A Guide for Narrative Preaching* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2003), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Cothen, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Crites, “Angels We Have Heard,” in *Religion as Story*, ed. James B. Wiggins (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Crites, *Angels We Have Heard*, 31.

truth of the stories, but to reproduce and relate the Bible stories to the contemporary audience's concerns in a sophistic and artful way.

Crites calls attention to the angel scenes in the Old Testament and the New Testament. He recognizes the appearance of angels as an ecstatic moment of divine intervention, "which breaks into the human horizon at decisive points in the story."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, through the angel's appearance, stories are changed into utterly new phases. Crites cites the case of Jacob, "Now Jacob contended with beings divine and human, and prevailed. That is his story, and through its action he was transformed though he had not planned it that way. The story took a surprising turn."<sup>6</sup> Even though angels are unrealistic characters, "angels are essentially narrative figures."<sup>7</sup> Thus, a preacher needs to recognize the overall picture of the story, including all the realistic and unrealistic characters or elements before developing narrative preaching. After that, preachers need to find some appropriate and understandable words or stories which will enable a contemporary audience to get the point with more excitement.

Preachers who are interested in narrative preaching also try to find similar experiences which connect the world of the text to the present. Commonalities shared between the biblical stories and the audience's own stories are the crucial meeting points and the contemporary readers or hearers find meaning at these intersections. Even with clearly different historical backgrounds or cultural elements, storytellers are able to find images, relate episodes, evoke responses in a contemporary audience and find common

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<sup>5</sup> Crites, *Angels We Have Heard*, 44-45. Crites cites the appearance of the angel in the scene wrestling with Jacob and in the Gospels. He sees another aspect of angels in that angels were used by writers of many other apocalyptic and mystical literature, giving some musical impression to readers. He comments that "At the appearance of the angel a story becomes musically fluid, transforming it from beginning to end" (46).

<sup>6</sup> Crites, *Angels We Have Heard*, 54-55.

<sup>7</sup> Crites, *Angels We Have Heard*, 55.



elements to help the hearers' understanding of the message. For this reason, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley point out the strength of storytelling as follows:

The most compelling reason why stories have such power to engage us is the narrative form of human existence itself. Human experience is structured in time and narrative. We comprehend our lives not as disconnected actions or isolated events but in terms of a narrative. We conceive of our lives as a web of stories - historical novel or miniseries in the making.<sup>8</sup>

Anderson and Foley recognize the necessity and the effectiveness of storytelling because human beings always arrange their encounters as part of their life stories. Thus, for human beings, making a narrative concerning their experiences is a natural tendency, so it can become a strong and important means to communicate deeply and frankly with each other. Narrative preaching takes advantage of this human tendency for making a story

Preachers and audiences are communicating invisibly when a preacher presents his/her sermons even though the audience is not responding directly by speaking at each moment that the preacher does. In this invisible inner communication between the two, telling a story allows the audience to reflect and respond strongly to the preacher's sermon because telling a story lets the audience immediately and effectively engage their life story from past or present experiences as they listen to the narratives in preaching. Brueggeman comments that "it becomes clear that we are in the midst of stories - valuing our own past, pushed by ruthless force, oddly visited by the one whom we dare to call God."<sup>9</sup> Anderson and Foley also argue that there are "particular narrative frameworks"

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<sup>8</sup> Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson and Foley, 7. They add that "weaving together the human and the divine enables us to hear our own stories retold with clarity and new possibility."

which enable human beings to interpret their life experiences in their own way.<sup>10</sup> The experiences of the narrative of the text and the experiences of the audience are finally able to connect with the help of narrative preaching.

Crites argues that “the narrative quality of experience has three dimensions, the sacred story, the mundane stories, and the temporal form of experience itself: three narrative tracks, each constantly reflecting and affecting the course of the others.”<sup>11</sup> Even though the mundane stories seem to be separated from the sacred stories, they can be tightly connected and related through a preacher’s creative work of narrative preaching. Additionally, an audience might easily be reminded of characters’ actions or decisions in Bible stories if they are already accustomed to the style of narrative preaching.

#### Narrative sources of parable, simile, metaphor and analogy

There are many stories in Scripture that include parables, similes, metaphors and analogies. The parables of Jesus are regarded as the most characteristic method in the teaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus uses parables to communicate effectively to his audiences. C. H. Dodd views “parables as the natural expression of a mind that sees truth in concrete pictures rather than conceives it in abstractions.”<sup>12</sup>

There are diverse parables according to their forms, characteristics or length. C.H. Dodd comments on the relationship between a parable and metaphor or simile. He writes, “At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life,

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson and Foley, 11. They add that “this framework becomes a key for interpreting reality and determines to what extent the stories we compose reveal and conceal.”

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Crites, “The Narrative Quality of Experience,” *American Academy of Religion* 39 (1971): 304. He adds that “the vitalities of experience itself may in turn make a man feel that some of the old stories have a hollow ring and may be the source of originality in the formation of new stories, or even new kinds of stories. But the way we remember, anticipate, and even directly perceive, is largely social. A sacred story in particular infuses experience at its root, linking a man’s individual consciousness with ultimate powers and also with the inner lives of those with whom he shares a common soil”(p.305).

<sup>12</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1961), 5.

arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”<sup>13</sup> According to C.H. Dodd, in terms of literary analysis, metaphor and simile are two forms included in the genre of parable. Thomas G. Long comments on Dodd’s description of parable that “when Dodd describes metaphor and simile, he means that metaphor is symbolic communication.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, metaphor and simile have a commonality in that both of them have a certain symbolic meaning within them.

On the contrary, there is a difference between the two. A simile makes a parallel between the thing we do not know and the thing we know well by using the word, “like.” For example, we can say, “The woman is like a bird.” This does not mean that the woman is equal to a bird, but points out that the woman has one aspect which is similar to the characteristic of a bird.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, a metaphor can be described as A symbolizes B. Thus, the expression, “the woman is like a bird” can be changed with the words, “the woman is a bird.” Perin argues that “metaphor stimulates the readers to have a new vision to the worldview.”<sup>16</sup>

There is another linguistic tool which is often compared with metaphor. That is an analogy. Long comments on analogy: “an analogy-style illustration works in a sermon like a simile works in a sentence: some issue, theme, idea, or action in the sermon is compared to something else.”<sup>17</sup> After defining the concept of analogy, Long distinguishes

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<sup>13</sup> Dodd, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Form of the Bible*, Trans. Young-mi Park (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1995), 176.

<sup>15</sup> Long, 185.

<sup>16</sup> Long, 186. Long comments that in a sense, the metaphor is the core of parables because metaphors have a power to evoke readers to experience some mysterious arena such as the kingdom of God. Long, 182.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2005), 204. He suggests an example: “Here is a simile: “Don’t ask George to do anything in a hurry. George is like

analogy from metaphor as follows:

In an analogy, one thing is compared to another thing. In a metaphor, something is unexpectedly summoned to stand for something else. An analogy seeks to help us to understand. A metaphor seeks to create new meaning, to help us experience the reality of something in a new way. An analogy is the tool of good teachers; a metaphor is the instrument of poets.<sup>18</sup>

Among the texts of the New Testament, it is well known that Jesus' parables are spectacular in their complexity of similes and metaphors enabling readers to experience the spiritual world. We can also see metaphors and analogies in Paul's letters even though they are not as frequent in Paul's writings as the parables of Jesus are in the synoptic gospels.

Paul used some analogies or metaphors according to his own intention. Paul's letters, Romans and I Corinthians, have more analogies and metaphors than others. Paul hoped to reveal his theological position within these rhetorical methods which are more descriptive and illustrative rather than demonstrative. Thomas G. Long comments on illustrative methods in preaching as follows:

Contemporary homiletics have sought to refine this insight by understanding precisely how each part of a sermon, including the various types of illustrative material, works together with all the other elements to achieve an integrated act of communication. When a slice of contemporary experience, a story, a metaphor, or an image is brought into a sermon, it is in order to accomplish some particular task that contributes to the larger sermon objective.<sup>19</sup>

As Long argues, the contemporary audience needs to be helped by illustrative materials.

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molasses." Now "George" and "molasses" are obviously two quite different realities, and normally we would not think to mention both of them in the same breath, but a simile brings them unexpectedly together for the sake of comparison and understanding. Even though they are very different, there is this one area of similarity: their common lack of speed."

<sup>18</sup> Long, *Witness of Preaching*, 215.

<sup>19</sup> Long, *Witness of Preaching*, 203.

The contemporary audience is accustomed to seeing because of cultural products, such as movies or dramas. Paul's illustrative analogies or metaphors present many important theological positions by using vivid or realistic illustrative stories. Paul takes advantage of illustrative rhetorical methods to persuade his audience in first century congregations. Contemporary preachers help their audiences to see by creating material that provide vivid and meaningful images.

## Chapter 3

### Paul's Metaphors and Analogies and Homiletic Reflection on them

#### The Marriage Analogy in Romans 7:1-6

Even though Paul is interested in “the inclusive gospel,”<sup>1</sup> he has to persuade Jewish Christians in the Roman congregation who emphasize the Jewish law and challenge their faith traditions. Paul’s approach is well demonstrated in his use of the marriage analogy of Romans 7:1-6.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Romans chapter 7 is regarded as a difficult text to deal with. Thus, Luke Timothy Johnson comments that “No part of Romans has been the object of so much scrutiny or the source of so much misunderstanding as Paul’s discussion of the law in 7:1-25.”<sup>3</sup> However, if we understand Paul’s analogy written in 7:1-6, we can get a clue to interpret Paul’s message more effectively.

The death of a woman’s husband becomes a turning point for her to have a chance to be free. The legitimacy of a wife’s relationship with her husband is absolutely controlled by her situation. As such a woman’s conduct is regarded either as adulterous or legitimate. The first point Paul makes is the relationship between Jewish law and sin. He shows from his analogy “how life under the law has led inevitably to sin.”<sup>4</sup> Under the law, human beings cannot separate freely and achieve freedom because the law always judges human beings’ behavior. Thus, Paul compares a woman’s life under her husband with freedom after her husband’s death from the law of adultery.

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<sup>1</sup> Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 208.

<sup>2</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson comments that “Paul declares that a law is valid only during a person’s life, and he tries to use the example of marriage to illustrate the legal point.” Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1997), 104.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Byrne, 210.

For a woman, the death of her husband paradoxically gives her freedom to escape the law, which restricted her life.<sup>5</sup> In a sense, her husband's death awakens her to freedom knowingly or unknowingly. Paul contrasts two situations; a woman's condition under her husband and freedom for the woman's successive remarriage with a new man.

An important key to interpreting Paul's marriage analogy lies in how we interpret the death of the husband, the state of becoming single, and remarriage with the new husband. First, we need to understand who the characters represent to understand this analogy appropriately. However, who the dead husband represents is not clear while the woman is generally thought to represent the believers or faith community. F.F. Bruce analyzes this analogy as follows:

When Paul applies the analogy, we are conscious of a reversal of the situation. The believer in Christ is compared to the wife, and the law to her husband, but whereas in the illustration it was the husband that died, in the application it is not the law that has died, but the believer; the believer has died with Christ...Paul's meaning can be expressed easily enough; as death breaks the bond between a husband and wife, so death - the believer's death with Christ-breaks the bond which formerly yoked him to the law, and now he is free to enter into union with Christ.<sup>6</sup>

According to Bruce, the woman represents the believers, and her husband represents the law. Even though Bruce interprets the two characters, he ambiguously skips the

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<sup>5</sup> Byrne, 210. Byrne mentions that "The law in question is clearly the Jewish law, which, while allowing a husband to divorce his wife, concedes no corresponding privilege to the woman. A married woman is thus ruled by the law binding her to her husband as long as he is alive." Concerning the law Paul mentions, Stephen Westerholm argues that "there is no reason to limit the law to the *Decalogue* because Paul deals the law with the same meaning of the Galatians' law. For example, when Paul says that the law and its works do not justify (Gal 2:16, Rom 3:28), circumcision and the observance of days, months, seasons, and years were included in the law's demands." Stephen Westerholm, Review of "Rhetoric, Law, and the Mystery of Salvation in Romans 7:1-6," by Keith Augustus Burton. *Seminary Studies* 40 (Autumn 2002):311. However, James D.G. Dunn's argument is more persuasive because he demonstrates the characteristics of Roman law, where "a woman was not freed from the law of her husband by his death, since she was obliged to mourn his death and to remain unmarried for twelve months." James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8 Word Biblical Commentary*, v. 38a (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 360. Thus, the meaning of the law is limited to Jewish law.

<sup>6</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 137.

interpretation of the meaning of the death of the old husband. He just emphasizes that the law is not dead, but the believers died with Jesus Christ. His interpretation is not complete because he does not clearly explain what the husband's death means. If he maintains the husband represents the law, it is logical to interpret the husband's death as the abolishment or death of the law.

C.E.B. Cranfield takes a similar line as Bruce, but he explains the reason why Paul does not say that the husband's death is the death of the law. Cranfield's argument seems to be more persuasive when he comments that "Paul refrained from speaking of the death of the law in order to avoid offending Jewish sentiment."<sup>7</sup> Cranfield's argument is logical considering the Jewish Christians of the Roman congregation stuck to the law. However, Cranfield does not explain how to interpret the death of the old husband.

Scholars interpret the death of the first husband and first marriage with a negative connotation. John D. Earnshaw interprets the first marriage positively. He interprets as follows:

In sum, Paul's theological point in 7:1-4 is that the believer has been delivered from the law and is now alive (to bear fruit, v.4) to God; and this transfer has been effected by the believer's participation with Christ in both his death and his resurrection...the wife's first marriage is viewed as illustrating the believer's union with Christ in his death and her second marriage is viewed as illustrating the believer's union with Christ in his resurrection.<sup>8</sup>

Earnshaw's interpretation is creative, but is still problematic because his interpretation of the wife's first marriage to the believer's participation with Christ does not match Paul's rhetorical mood. Paul emphasizes freedom and anticipates a woman's

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<sup>7</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 149.

<sup>8</sup> John D. Earnshaw, "Reconsidering Paul's Marriage Analogy in Romans 7:1-4," *NTS* 40 (1994): 72.



remarriage to another man positively while he describes the first marriage negatively as a yoke confining a woman. Thus, the interpretation of the first marriage as participation with Christ is seen as an oversight missing Paul's rhetorical stream. Nevertheless, Earnshaw's interpretation of the second marriage implies enough about how important it was for Paul to change his readers' interest from the first marriage to the second marriage even though Earnshaw's interpretation of the resurrection of Christ is still problematic.

As for the second marriage, Stephen Westerholm points out the difficulty in interpreting this analogy. He comments that "Paul means that believers were temporarily freed from the law, then became its subjects again (albeit in a new kind of relationship) through their union with the resurrected Christ."<sup>9</sup> Westerholm interestingly interprets the law restriction arising from the second marriage to the faith stage of the union with Christ. He also interestingly imagines the situation of the remarried woman. He writes

Should the widow remarry, she would in effect become subject again to the law forbidding adultery. However the apostle ends the analogy with the widow's freedom to remarry, saying nothing of any subsequent relationship to the law should she do so.<sup>10</sup>

Westerholm's insight reflects well Paul's hypothesis of remarriage and a new husband. The new husband can be interpreted either as new life under Jesus Christ or Christ himself. Of course, it is not clear that Paul really did mean this, but there is a possibility of interpreting the passage this way because Paul is so positive about the relationship between the woman and her new husband without mentioning returning restrictions in the second marriage.

The first marriage is clearly compared with the second marriage. The death of the

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<sup>9</sup> Westerholm, 311.

<sup>10</sup> Westerholm, 311.

first husband represents the believer leaving the old faith tradition achieved by abiding by the law. Thus, the old husband specifically represents not just believers but the believers who stick to the law, and the state after her husband's death is the stage of freedom after deserting the old covenant following the law. The second marriage represents the stage of union with Jesus Christ. This is well revealed by Paul's conclusion in verse 6, "But now, by dying to what once bounds us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code." Paul contrasts the newness of the Spirit with the old way of the written code. Even though Paul does not explain what the second marriage means, he strongly implies the probable remarriage of the widow and connects this life with the newness of the Spirit. That is the reason why Paul does not comment on the restriction of the second marriage, which can also restrict freedom as in the first marriage. On the contrary, Paul implies that only the positive will happen through remarriage.

#### Homiletic Reflection on the Marriage Analogy

Even though Paul eventually tries to achieve his theological purpose, freedom in faith, he also emphasizes the ethical lives of the Roman congregation through his analogy. Through this analogy, Paul implicitly recognizes that the married woman should not have a sexual relationship with another man while her husband is still alive. Ironically, this is the law from which comes freedom. Even though this story seems to accentuate only faith in Christ, the ethical duty existing in the law still remains in the analogy.

Paul's overall position to the law is negative, but this does not mean a total negation. For Paul, to be under grace is to live according to the Spirit whereas to be under law is to live according to the flesh. However, Paul does not totally reject the present

system of the law. This is the reality which the Roman congregation confronted. Paul does not try to abolish the Jewish law, but points out its limits in view of the new law's coming. Thus, there is a delicate tension between the two. Even though Paul urges the new age or new law, he does not ask the congregation to abolish the ethical value of the law.

Homiletically, while Paul recognizes the reality of the Jewish law, Paul also proclaims the achieved salvation of the Roman congregation. The most important focus of Paul is the new life that is possible for the Roman congregation. Paul concludes his analogy with this proclamation in v.6. "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Paul defines the present Roman congregation's stage as the new life of the Spirit. Paul rejects the Jewish congregation's tendency of returning to the age of the law by urging them to sever it.<sup>11</sup> This is Paul's particular homiletic method in this passage using analogy.

#### The Potter Analogy in Romans 9:20-24

Romans 9:20-24 includes one familiar story of the potter, which is located in the larger unit of 9:19-29. Paul deals with the relationship between the potter and pottery, and the potter's authority to dominate his workmanship, clay.

This story is classified as an analogy. In the passages, the important parts that decide its literal genre are v. 21 and 24. Paul says in v.21, "Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for honorable purposes and some

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<sup>11</sup> Byrne, 211-13. Thus, Byrne's comment is proper. He writes that "the simple point Paul wants to make is that freedom comes about through death and that required death is something which believers have already undergone 'through the body of Christ.' Brendan also sees the contrast existing in vv.5-6. He mentions that "viewing vv. 5-6 as a whole, we can see that the two statements in which Paul sets the contrast between past and present anticipate in a programmatic way the descriptions of life 'under the law' and life 'in the Spirit' that they are now to follow."

for dishonorable purposes?” In v.24 Paul applies this to his congregation. He writes that “even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?” These verses do not have complicated symbolic meaning or unexpected application. Readers can grasp enough to understand the meaning of this story from the interpretation of the potter as God and the interpretation of the pottery as people. Furthermore, Paul’s rhetoric uses a familiar image to help the congregation to understand. Thus, the story about a potter is classified as an analogy.

From the larger unit, Paul’s pottery analogy is tightly connected with the story of Moses and Pharaoh in vv.14-18. Paul reminds the Jewish people of the Exodus story in order to show God’s absolute right to control all human beings. Paul treats Moses’ exodus and Pharaoh’s obstinacy as God’s intentional will. According to Paul, the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is attributed to God’s intention. Through the Exodus story, Paul shows that God can achieve all things and control the destinies of human beings. The core idea of God’s absolute right functions to help Paul’s congregation get the pottery analogy. In other words, the Exodus story supports the pottery story. Additionally, Paul uses parallels between these two stories to argue that Moses occupies the same role as pottery designed for honorable purposes (v.21) while Pharaoh occupies the same role as pottery designed for dishonorable purposes (v.21). Paul refers to God’s absolute authority in v.18, a part of the conclusion of the small unit of vv.14-18 as follows: “Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”<sup>12</sup> Paul reflects in v.18 that God has mercy on Moses while God hardens Pharaoh’s mind. However, Pharaoh, who represents pottery for dishonorable purposes is paradoxical because Paul

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<sup>12</sup> F. F. Bruce comments on v. 18 that “the first part of this verse is a further echo of Exodus 33:19; the second part refers to the occasion on which God is said to ‘harden’ the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians” (Ex. 7:3, 9:12; 14:4, 7). Bruce, 183.

maintains that God uses Pharaoh in order to display his power and proclaim his name.

After demonstrating God's sovereignty over all human beings in vv. 18-19, Paul highlights the point by using the analogy of the potter. Paul writes, "Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for honorable purposes and some for dishonorable purposes?"<sup>13</sup> David L. Bartlett comments on the key point of Paul's analogy as follows:

Paul uses the image of the potter and the clay, which Jeremiah used somewhat differently in Jeremiah 18:6. This again is a way of reminding us of God's sovereignty. God is not only powerful, God is purposeful. The Creator creates with purpose, both the pots that will be kept and the pots that will be destroyed.<sup>14</sup>

Bartlett's interpretation of the potter as purposeful is appropriate because God is described by Paul as not just creating human beings, but also distinguishing them according to God's purpose. However, Bartlett does not explain how Paul adapts Jeremiah's version. Jeremiah 18: 6 is written, "Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." As Bartlett comments, the core idea of Jeremiah's version is God's sovereignty. However, Paul first alludes to the potter's work when he writes in v. 20 "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'why did you make me like this'?" Paul does not mention the potter and the pottery, but mentions 'what is formed' and 'he who formed it,' which respectively might mean creatures, and God. Then, in v. 21, Paul writes about the potter and the two kinds of pottery from a different point of view from Jeremiah's version. Jeremiah's focusing idea in his pottery analogy is God's

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<sup>13</sup> Concerning this analogy, Bruce suggests some parallels to this analogy from Wisdom 15:7 and Ecclesiasticus 33:10-13. Bruce, 184.

<sup>14</sup> David L. Bartlett, *Romans* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 91. Adolf Schlatter also comments that "Paul observes not only what God is able to do but also what God wills." Adolf von Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 208.

sovereignty to destroy, but Paul's main idea is God's sovereignty to create different human beings' destinies. Jeremiah and Paul describe God's role differently.

In Paul's use of the Old Testament, Adolf Schlatter argues that Paul adapts this pottery analogy from Isa 29:16 and 45:9.<sup>15</sup> Isaiah's two verses are as follows:

You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay? Shall the thing made say of its maker, 'He did not make me'; or the thing formed say of the one who formed it, 'He has no understanding'? "(Isa 29:16) ; Woe to you who strive with your Maker, earthen vessels with the potter! Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, "What are you making"? or 'Your work has no handles'?"(Isa 45:9)

The focus of Isaiah's version is also God's sovereignty. In this passage, Isaiah mentions the absurdity of human beings' challenge to God's authority. Nevertheless, Isaiah also does not claim the idea of God's authority of choice in making different pottery as Paul emphasizes.<sup>16</sup> Paul seems to have adapted the same example story used by Isaiah and Jeremiah for his theological purpose. Isaiah and Jeremiah focus on absolute sovereignty, which human beings can not challenge, but Paul's analogy focuses more on sovereignty to distinguish two kinds of groups by using two kinds of pottery in v. 21. Paul illustrates two characteristics of the potter. One is the right to create the pottery,<sup>17</sup> and the second is the right to assign different forms to the pottery. From the same source

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<sup>15</sup> Shin-Lun Shum comments that "Other OT and extra-OT passages, such as Jer. 18:6; Isa 64:8; 45:9, and especially Wis 15:7, may also help shape Paul's thinking, as most scholars have posited; but in terms of wording, Isa 29:16 seems most likely to be one of the OT source-texts of Rom 9:20-21." Shin-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sibylline and Qumran Sectarian Texts* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 204-05.

<sup>16</sup> Shin-Lun Shum also comments that "many scholars have treated Rom 9:20-21 as a citation from Isa 29:16. However, this is less likely in view of the lack of citation formula and the order of wording; rather, it seems better to see the relationship between the two passages as allusive, allowing more space for Paul's creativity in utilizing Scripture." Shin-Lun Shum, 205.

<sup>17</sup> John Gill gives an interesting point about the similarity between the pottery and human beings. He comments that "The pottery is an allusion to the first creation of man, out of the clay, or dust of the earth (Gen 2:7)." Gill, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (London: Aaron Ward, 2002), 344. According to Gill, Paul's decision of choosing pottery analogy is intentionally made for reminding his readers of human beings' creation by God.

material of clay, the potter can choose to make totally different vessels.<sup>18</sup>

From the observation that Paul's analogy is different from Jeremiah's and Isaiah's analogies, readers' interests might naturally be moved toward the identities of two different kinds of pottery in v.21; one has honorable purposes and the other has dishonorable purposes. These two words are respectively *timen* and *atimian* in Greek.<sup>19</sup> Even though these two words which represent objects are important, many scholars skip the interpretation of them. They try to find the meaning in the potter analogy.

C.E.B. Cranfield comments on the point of this analogy by observing the verses after v. 24. He focuses on God's positive mind to save all human beings. He writes:

In view of the sequel in vv.25 and 26, we must understand Paul's point to be that God has effectually called the vessels of mercy not from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. The presence of Gentiles within the Church is the sign and pledge that the realm of rejection, of Ishmael, Esau, Pharaoh, and of the unbelieving Jews themselves, is not finally shut out from the mercy of God.<sup>20</sup>

Cranfield's comment demonstrates Paul's theological point of mission represented in this analogy. Paul describes God's character as benevolent in order to reveal God's will to

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<sup>18</sup> Robert H. Johnston outlines the process of making pottery in ancient times as follows: "The biblical potter used a variety of methods to build and shape his pottery. The earliest evidences of the potters' techniques indicate that hand building was the means used. Some ware was made by the pinch-pot method; a piece of clay is held in the palm of one hand and the walls formed by pinching the clay with the other hand until the walls have been raised and thinned. This method was used for making small containers, such as votive dishes or miniature pots. An experienced potter can work very swiftly with this technique and produce a large variety of small forms." Johnston, "The Biblical Potter," *Biblical Archaeologist* 37(2004): 91-92.

<sup>19</sup> *Atimian* is used in Paul's other letters such as I Cor 11:14, 15:43; II Cor 6:8, 11:21; II Tim 2:20. In these verses, this word *atimian* means 'dishonor' or 'disgrace' or 'ignoble.' The more interesting thing is the case in II Tim. In Tim 2:20 is written that "In a large house there are not only articles of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble." In II Timothy, the author shows a similar case like the Roman potter analogy, but does not show the potter's role of making vessels like Roman's case. Nevertheless, II Timothy also states that all kinds of vessels are classified by two categories, noble purposes and ignoble purposes exactly the same as the potter analogy in Romans. If we regard the verses of II Tim concerning vessels not as Paul's real writing, we can realize that the potter analogy in Romans, Paul's authentic writing, is transited with some different forms by the later author of II Timothy, who might be one of the Pauline schools.

<sup>20</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 242.

save as many people as possible. Nevertheless, Cranfield's comment does not explain what the two kinds of pottery designate.

Paul uses two words of pottery for honorable purposes and pottery for dishonorable purposes to mean two kinds of people according to their calling by God. Paul writes about two groups representing these two vessels in v. 24. He mentions in v.24, "even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?" Paul demonstrates that honorable pottery represents two groups called by God from the Jewish and the Gentile people within the Roman congregation while dishonorable pottery represents people from the two groups not called by God.

Paul also demonstrates God's enduring love for the people outside the community, who are called by Paul as the pottery for dishonorable purposes. Paul does not exclude the possibility of God's grace outside the congregation. Paul mentions that "What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory"(v.22). Ben Witherington III comments as follows:

When Paul is referring to the hardening of some, he is not talking about eternal damnation. He is talking about a process in history that is temporal and temporary. Therefore, Paul speaks in 9.22-23 not of those saved or damned from before the foundation of the world, but rather vessels that are currently positively related to God and vessels that currently are not.<sup>21</sup>

One of Paul's purposes in writing to the Romans is to ask for the Roman congregation's support in order to evangelize non-believers in Western Europe, such as Spain (Rom

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<sup>21</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 253. Witherington comments on the possibility of the Jews' salvation rejecting Christ that "Paul explains that, though the large majority of Jews have currently rejected Christ, this should not be taken as a sign that God has rejected them, not least because there have been various times in Israel's history (e.g., the wilderness wandering period) when the majority of Jews rejected God's plan and purposes for them."



15:23).<sup>22</sup> While Paul emphasizes God's sovereignty over choosing his people according to God's purpose, Paul also emphasizes God's unceasing work to rescue more people. Paul wants the Roman congregation to have a vision for mission work toward non-believers by showing God's ongoing salvation history.

By using the potter analogy, Paul can eventually achieve his theological goals; one goal is to encourage the Roman congregation by designating them as honorable pottery, which is called by God. By doing this, Paul can weaken the theological controversy between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers. The second thing is that Paul can reveal his theological concern for the mission toward non-believers outside the congregation by describing God's patient character towards the people rejecting Christ. This is in Paul's plan of mission strategy for his future mission journey.

#### Homiletic Reflection on the Potter Analogy

Paul's excellent skill in using stories lies in his ability to connect two different characteristic stories. One is an old Jewish story which has historic events and historic characters. The other one is an analogy concerning the general job description of a potter. However, these two kinds of stories meet under the same theme of God's absolute unchallengeable authority over human beings. Paul suggests a story happened in historic events, which might be more vivid in his congregation, specifically in Jewish believers in a Roman congregation. On the other hand, the Exodus event might be strange to Gentile

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<sup>22</sup> L. Ann Jervis comments on the purpose of Paul's writing Romans as follows: "Because Paul wants to use Rome as a base for his missionary travels westward, he needs the sympathetic support of the Roman Christians. So, in the hope of garnering a firm base of support, Paul writes to the Christians at Rome-either to introduce himself or to exonerate himself from certain false perceptions that they may have." Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 19. Paul's mission is not limited in Rome, but is toward the more spacious regions Paul never has experienced. Thus, Paul needs to be generous toward non-believers even though the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers in Roman congregations tend to have an exclusive attitude about mission toward the outside world.

believers. However, Paul complements the historical story with the potter analogy, which can satisfy all the congregation members including the Gentile believers, even though Paul adapts his story from the Old Testament. Paul eventually considers all the congregational life situations and chooses the appropriate example stories until the meaning of his argument is completely understood by different ethnic groups. Homiletically, preachers need to consider all congregation members' backgrounds. Even though congregation members are one in one church, they are different in their backgrounds in view of their educational background, financial situation, hometown, and so forth. Thus, preachers need to find their example stories which can satisfy all congregation members' diverse cases even though this is a very difficult job for preachers. If a preacher chooses an example story which is knowable only to some particular people, he/she can fail to send his/her message effectively to all members of the congregation. It is better for preachers to use a general story which is understandable to all congregation members.

Secondly, in potter analogy, Paul never copies Isaiah's or Jeremiah's version. Paul creates new ideas using the same story based on the understanding that a potter can use the same clay to make different pottery. Paul's way of using the OT's story reminds preachers living in different cultures of how they can create the appropriate example stories using many types of stories such as metaphor, analogy, simile, daily life stories or other types according to their cultural backgrounds. Even in Paul's potter analogy, we can grasp up the idea of God's sovereignty as a creator and determiner of our destinies. When preachers prepare their example stories for preaching, they can think about many example stories with a main idea. Specifically, even though preachers exegete Paul's

analogy in their sermons, they need to explain it in different versions to their audiences. There are many sources which can be used as example stories in preaching. Preachers need to develop those sources into their theological goals.

### The Planting Metaphor in I Corinthians 3:1-9

Paul's planting story in I Cor 3:1-9 is classified as a metaphor rather than analogy because this has some symbolic and poetic characteristics. Paul compares the act of planting to founding the Corinthian church and the act of watering to teaching or leading them. His story is simple, but it makes readers think symbolically with many implications.

Paul's planting metaphor in I Cor 3:1-9 has been famous to all believers because of its simplicity and persuasive power. To understand Paul's planting metaphor, it is helpful to analyze the division of the Corinthian congregation revealed in I Cor 1:10-17. Paul emphasizes a Christ-centered faith which can be connected with a God-centered faith of a growing congregation in the planting metaphor in I Cor 3:1-9.

The one difference between I Cor 3:1-9 and I Cor 1:10-17 is that Paul writes about Apollos in his planting metaphor in I Cor 3:6-7, but he introduces three leaders in I Cor 1:12 besides himself. I Cor 1:11-12 says, "My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this; One of you says, 'I follow Paul' another, 'I follow Apollos' another, 'I follow Cephas' still another, 'I follow Christ.'" Paul hears that there are some factions which become obstacles to the unity of the Corinthian congregation and realizes that he needs to figure out this serious problem. Concerning these four factions, Hans Conzelmann points out two curious points:

There are two problematic points: (1) the nature of groups, the relationship between the

member and the head of the party: (2) the meaning of the fourth slogan and therewith the number of the groups. The names of the heads do not tell us anything certain; Cephas, Apollos, Paul himself. Of Apollos we know only what can be gathered from the few references in the epistles of Paul and from one or two passages in Acts. His theology is unknown to us. I Corinthians reflects his personal success in Corinth.<sup>23</sup>

Conzelmann's problematic points can not be solved by text evidence even though readers are curious about the identities of Cephas', Apollos' and Christ's factions as well as the leaders themselves. Concerning Apollos and Cephas, Robert M. Grant tries to give some historical information based on Acts as follows:

Around the year 51, Paul himself was expelled from the Jewish community and sailed from Corinth's eastern port of Cenchreae (Acts 18:18), then headed for Ephesus before continuing on to Caesarea and traveling by land to Antioch in Syria and returning to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22; 19:1). During his absence from Corinth, the community enjoyed the ministrations of a certain Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria who was 'well-versed in the scriptures.' Though at Ephesus he 'taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, he knew only the baptism of John' until corrected by Paul's former companions Priscilla and Aquilla. Acts 19:1-6 indicates that his 'baptism of John' did not involve the Holy Spirit or speaking with tongues or prophesying...A more serious disagreement, also reflected among the Corinthians, was with the apostle Cephas. Paul did not tell the Corinthians about his controversy with Cephas, but went into it rather fully in the first two chapters of Galatians.<sup>24</sup>

Grant shows well why the Corinthian congregation is attracted by Apollos and how Paul deals with Cephas in I Corinthians differently from Galatians.

J. Paul Sampley also comments that "divisiveness among those who are in Christ is simply unthinkable for Paul...The passage is bracketed by a reference to Christ as Lord on one side (Cor. 1:10) and the 'cross of Christ' on the other (1:17)."<sup>25</sup> As Sampley

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<sup>23</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 33. Concerning Apollos, according to Acts 18:24 he was from Alexandria and was a learned exegete.

<sup>24</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Paul in the Roman World: The Conflict at Corinth* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> J. Paul Sampley, "The First Letter to the Corinthians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*. ed. Leander Keck, 773-1003. Vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 807.

comments, Paul turns the attentions of struggling factions among the congregation to Christ. Paul reminds the Corinthian congregation of the event of the crucified Christ and the ceremony of baptism. Paul writes that “Paul wasn’t crucified for you, was he? And you weren’t baptized into the name of Paul, were you?” (Cor. 1:13) Paul persuades conflicting factional members by his simple, but rhetorical questions. Paul eventually argues that Christ should become the only leader of the Corinthian congregation.

Paul’s Christ-centered emphasis is more clearly and persuasively revealed in his planting metaphor in I Cor 3:1-9. Paul tries to make the spiritual elitists be humble by designating them as infants fed by milk rather than solid food (3:1-2).<sup>26</sup> The reason for this is demonstrated by Richard B. Hays. Hays comments that “the real measure of spiritual maturity is unity and peace in the community.”<sup>27</sup> As Hays comments, Paul regards the conflicting factions as lower in spiritual maturity. Paul’s point is that no matter how some people argue that they are spiritually mature, they cannot be if they are still divided by non-essential reasons. James Francis takes the same line as Hays in a sense because he also focuses on what Paul really means about the life of spiritually mature believers in I Cor 3:1-2. He comments as follows:

Paul is faced with the paradox that the Corinthians having believed and accepted his gospel yet behave in an unspiritual manner...So Paul chides his readers not for failure to advance their understanding (some were exceedingly proud of their knowledge), but for failing to allow what they had known and realized to be true to inform their on-going Christian life.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker focuses on the meaning of milk and solid food showing the similarity with Hebrews 5:12-14. Kistemaker comments that “the metaphor is interesting. Paul uses the same language as the writer of Hebrews, who also depicts his audience as babes who consume milk instead of solid food (Heb.5:12-14). The author of Hebrews explains that the metaphor milk signifies the rudimentary doctrines of the Christian faith. But Paul gives the figure of speech and fails to explain it...solid food consists of advanced Christian doctrine.” Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 101.

<sup>27</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 49.

<sup>28</sup> James Francis, “As Babes in Christ,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 7 (1980): 217.

In v.6, Paul writes, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.” Paul distinguishes his role from Apollos without rejecting Apollos’ role to the Corinthian congregation. Thus, John Hargreaves’ comments,

God had given each of them different work to do. Paul ‘planted’, i.e. he was the first evangelist to reach Corinth. Apollos carried on the work that Paul had begun. But the difference between them was not that one was superior to the other, only that they did different work.”<sup>29</sup>

As Hargreave’s comments, Paul emphasizes mutual dependence between himself and Apollos, which cannot be separated. If Apollos did not inherit Paul’s ministry successfully in the Corinthian congregation, Paul’s endeavor to found that church would fail. Paul makes himself be intimated with Apollos by making the two works of planting and watering roles be tightly related to each other. Eventually, Paul tries to describe planting and watering as deeds having an equality. Therefore, Paul explicitly writes that “we are fellow workers for God (v.8).”

In the job description of planting, Paul makes his Corinthian congregation regard his ministry as the past work. In other words, he lets the Corinthian congregation know him as a founder rather than a contemporary influential leader. Even though Paul feels that there his influential authority is still among the Corinthian congregation, even after leaving the congregation, he intentionally tries to decrease his influence by identifying his role with planting, one part of the process of growing a plant. In the same way, Paul describes Apollos’ role as watering a plant, which is also one part of the process of growing a plant.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, Gregory J. Lockwood’s comment is fitting. He writes that

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<sup>29</sup> John Hargreaves, *A Guide to I Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1978), 32.

<sup>30</sup> The distinction of Paul’s or Apollos’ role and God’s role is clearly revealed in Paul’s usage of Greek words. Gregory J. Lockwood notices the different grammatical use. He writes that “among five verbs of *ἐπιστευσατε*, *ἔδωκεν*, *ἐφύτευσα*, *ἐποτίσεν*, *ἠρξάνεν* in v.5-6 the first four verbs are aorists

“Whereas Paul’s church planting ministry was limited to an eighteen-month period, and Apollos was engaged in watering for a limited time...God was continually at work, causing the Word to keep growing and thriving among them.”<sup>31</sup> More interestingly, when Paul imagines this planting work, he presupposes a nursery plant. Thus, the period of watering is limited during the nursery plant period. After a nursery plant is adapted well in the soil, it can grow without another’s help such as watering. Therefore, Paul limits Apollos’ role as he does his role. These limitations of jobs such as planting and watering become strong metaphorical devices to highlight the role of God.

Paul eventually emphasizes the role of God, and attributes the most important role in the Corinthian congregation to God while he deemphasizes his and Apollos’ roles. In this sense, Conzelmann’s comment on the planting metaphor’s core intention is proper. He mentions that “the result of this conception of office is to break up both the Paul party and the Apollos party alike. Both lose their heads.”<sup>32</sup>

In a more important insight from his planting metaphor, Paul tries to transfer the congregation’s competition from conflict into cooperation. Paul recognizes diversity while he gives up his monopoly.<sup>33</sup> Paul knows that God can use the many diverse talented servants such as Apollos and Cephas, and he embraces them because those gifts originally come from God. Thus, for Paul, the meaning of competition cannot be

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expressing past completed actions, but the last one is imperfect, expressing God’s ongoing activity in the faith.” Gregory J. Lockwood, *I Corinthians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 110. Herschel H. Hobbs also writes that “in the Greek Paul asks not ‘who’ but ‘what’ is Paul or Apollo (v.5). Hobbs, *The Epistles to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), 25. They are instruments by which they believed in Christ.” According to Lockwood’s and Hobbs’ observation, Paul is considerate to choose the words in order to reveal his or Apollo’s limitation compared with God.

<sup>31</sup> Lockwood, 112.

<sup>32</sup> Conzelmann, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Paul pursues the value of difference as he classifies the body members’ function. Paul moves the conflicting groups’ concerns from what kinds of gifts are superior to what kinds of gifts are different. Paul’s emphasis on the value of difference softens conflict between the congregation.

achieved because Paul was given a different talented gift from the others. Paul recognizes the reality of serious competition among some factions including his followers, and transforms the power of competition to the power of cooperation.

Paul's final goal is to evangelize non-believers. Paul never forgets his mission. His thought of cooperation comes from his great vision for mission. This idea can be seen in his other letters. In Phil 1:15-18, Paul recognizes some believers' mission even though their way of mission has some deficiencies.<sup>34</sup> He eventually regards some competitive believers as God's servants in view of cooperation to achieve the kingdom of God. Paul tries to recognize the effectiveness of other missionaries work even though he completely does not agree with their theologies. Paul tries to see other people's mission work in view of God's position rather than in Paul's supporters' positions. Cooperation is the only way to recover the difficulties and achieve God's final purpose.

#### Homiletic Reflection on the Planting Metaphor

A planting story might be an easy story for the Corinthian congregation to understand because planting is common activity for the people living in the Greco-Roman world in which agriculture was a major industry.<sup>35</sup> Planting is work which was understood by everyone living in the Greco-Roman world. Thus, for Paul, the planting metaphor can be a familiar topic for all the church congregation members living in the

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<sup>34</sup> Paul writes in Phil 1:15-18 as follows: "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice."

<sup>35</sup> Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller comment on the economy of the Roman Empire as follows: "The Roman economy was underdeveloped. This means essentially that the mass of the population lived at or near the subsistence level. In a typical underdeveloped, pre-industrial economy, a large proportion of the labor force is employed in agriculture, which is the main avenue for investment and source of wealth." Cornelia Cyss Crocker, *Reading I Corinthians in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 125.



Greco-Roman culture.<sup>36</sup> Of course, even though the people have different jobs from agricultural jobs, they have experienced or seen the process of how the plants are grown. Paul connects the congregation members' experiences concerning growing a plant with the spiritual area.

The second thing is that Paul does not use an image from a professional farmer. The farmer who plants young plants also waters in order to grow a young plant well. However, Paul intentionally separates the planting person and watering person in order to achieve his theological purpose. Paul's planting metaphor can be quite persuasive to contemporary hearers because it calls attention to the equal importance of different types of work. In this sense, Paul's planting metaphor makes a strong impression on the contemporary congregation to understand the importance of co-working.

Paul shows his ability to design a story. This can be a challenge to the contemporary preachers who try to find appropriate example stories in their sermons. Sometimes, preachers fail to find the best example story for their sermons even though they spend a long time trying to find one. In this case, they can create a probable story adapted for their argument. When Paul thinks about cooperation in ministry, he intentionally divides planting work into planting and watering to make his point. Paul designed a planting and watering image for his purposes and created a new metaphor. Preachers can create some stories that reflect what is reasonable and probable in human daily lives.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 38. David J. Williams argues for a connection between Old Testament texts such as Psalm 1:3 and Isaiah 61:3 and Paul's planting metaphor. Williams suggests other examples concerning growing plants such as 'growing abundantly' in 2 Thess 1:3 or 'becoming strong in faith, rooted and founded in Christ and his love' in Eph 3:17 or Col 2:6-7.

<sup>37</sup> This case can be proved by Jesus' parables because Jesus might also create some stories to demonstrate his ideas.

### The Running Metaphor in I Cor 9:24-27

Paul's example story in I Cor 9:24-27 is viewed as a metaphor. Paul uses terminology in his running metaphor in an implicit way, not revealing what each character and act means explicitly. This means that his use of the image of running games has some symbolic meaning which can be interpreted by the readers in some different ways. Furthermore, Paul makes his running story simple and impressive, showing its poetic and dynamic aspects.<sup>38</sup>

The example story (I Cor 9:24-27) is the final paragraph of chapter 9. Gordon D. Fee mentions that "This paragraph is transitional; it brings the long excursus of chap. 9 to its conclusion and at the same time prepares for a return to the argument against going to the cultic meals (10:1-22)."<sup>39</sup> Paul invites his hearers to the games and deals with the Corinthian congregation as if they were athletes in training to win the race.

Richard B. Hays comments on Paul's running metaphor: "Paul's use of this imagery is inspired by the Isthmian Games, the great athletic festival held at Corinth every two years; the Corinthians would find Paul's depictions of the runner and the boxer familiar, vivid, and compelling."<sup>40</sup> He gives information not just about a running game, but also a historical festival of athletic events and other sports. Particularly, Paul reminds the Corinthian congregation of another image of a boxer by mentioning in v.26, "I do not

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<sup>38</sup> Paul's idea of his running metaphor in I Cor 9:24-27 is also written in his other authentic letters such as Galatians and Philippians. Paul mentions in Gal 2:2, "I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain"; Gal 5:7, "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?"; Phil 2:16, "As you hold out the word of life in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. However, even though II Tim is not regarded as a Pauline letter, it uses a similar running metaphor, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Warren W. Wiersbe, *Index of Biblical Images* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 88. Among them, I Corinthians's running metaphor is the best in describing characteristics of running games with vividness and details.

<sup>39</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 433.

<sup>40</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 155.

fight like a man shadow boxing.” The boxing metaphor is included in Paul’s example story as an auxiliary image in dealing with the theme of an aimless life (v.26). Of course, according to Jerry M. Hullinger there are other games which consist of horse races, chariot contests, jumping, wrestling, throwing of the discus and javelin besides foot races and boxing that Paul mentions.<sup>41</sup> Gordon D. Fee gives more concrete information than Hays concerning the athletic games that Paul mentions. He writes,

These Games, held every two years under the patronage of Corinth and second only to the Olympics, were extravagant festivals of religion, athletics, and the arts, attracting thousands of competitors and visitors from all over the empire. Its sponsors and greater athletes were honored in Isthmia itself by monuments, statues, and inscriptions. Paul would have been in Corinth during the Games of A.D. 51 (in the spring). Since there were no permanent facilities for visitors until the second century A.D., they had to stay in tents...Paul would have had ample opportunity to ply his trade and share the gospel with the crowds visiting the Games of the year.<sup>42</sup>

Fee’s comment gives some insights into why Paul uses his running metaphor in his letters more than any other. According to Fee, there is a strong possibility of Paul’s real participation in the athletic games in spite of the absence of text evidence.<sup>43</sup> Bruce N. Fisk also suggests another possibility, mentioning that “even if Paul never set foot in the stadium, the imagery in these verses would obviously resonate with his earliest readers.”<sup>44</sup> Garrison points to the connection between Paul’s athletic metaphor and the

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<sup>41</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger “The Historical Background of Paul’s Athletic Allusions,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004): 345.

<sup>42</sup> Fee, 433.

<sup>43</sup> Of course, athletic games held every two years might be a great festival for the Corinthian people. However, the possibility of Paul’s participation cannot be guaranteed just by his references to a running metaphor. It can be argued that the athletic games for pagan god would be an obstacle for Paul to participate in that festival. Victor Paul Furnish writes, “The Corinth that Paul knew had regained its role as administrator of the famed Isthmian Games, held every two years at a site on the isthmus just a few miles from the center of the city. These athletic and cultural events, dedicated to the sea-god, Poseidon (known to the Romans as Neptune), adds to the already large numbers of visitors coming to Corinth by reason of its commercial and political importance.” Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>44</sup> Bruce N. Fisk, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2000), 60.

earlier writings of the first century C.E. He writes that “Paul’s use of the athlete metaphor in I Corinthians 9:24-26 echoes the themes and values of his contemporary culture; he employs the language and symbolism of other teachers of the first C.E (e.g., Philo and Musonius).”<sup>45</sup>

Under this historical background of the running metaphor, the primary concern is to understand what the characters represent. Most of all, verse 24 needs to be interpreted in terms of the identities of ‘all the runners’ and ‘one.’ Paul writes, “Do you know that in the race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Run in such a way that you may win it (v.24).” C. K. Barret interprets this verse as follows:

Entry does not in itself guarantee a prize: it does so neither in athletics, nor in Christianity. You have entered the Christian life through baptism: this does not guarantee your final perseverance... The weight of his argument is directed simply against the notion that there is an automatic connection between running and winning. There is none. The Christian must not only start but continue in the right way.<sup>46</sup>

Barret concludes that all the runners represent the congregation members who become believers through baptism, and one (runner) represents the believer who will finally obtain the glory of salvation. Thus, Barret includes all the runners in the category of all the congregation members excluding non-believers. According to him, the final victory of getting salvation is achieved by a proper process of enduring strict training of self-discipline (v.25) In other words, even the people who are called as believers by baptism might fail by not enduring self-discipline.

However, Barret’s point is so strict in that it limits the runners to be only the believers officiated by baptism. On the contrary, regarding all the runners as all human

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<sup>45</sup> Roman Garrison, “Paul’s Use of the Athlete Metaphor,” *Studies in Religion* 22/2 (1993): 216.

<sup>46</sup> C. K. Barret, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 217.

beings is more proper because Paul does not indicate that all the runners are baptized believers. Barret continuously interprets 'self-discipline' as living temperately in Christian lives. Additionally, Barret clearly interprets the meaning of "all the runners" and "one" from his perspective. However, he skips the historical background of 'self-discipline' in athletic runners. Bruce N. Fisk gives information on self-discipline: "all participants in the games had to prepare rigorously, apparently for a minimum of ten months."<sup>47</sup> Thus, Paul has two images of racing and training respectively in v.24 and v.25a. The two images are tightly connected with the relationship of cause and effect.

However, one problematic issue is that Paul's description of one winning runner seems to invite us to imagine a single winner or believer who achieves salvation among the multitude of believers.<sup>48</sup> It is ironic for Paul to designate one person because Paul's mission theology is a gospel for all people.

Paul does not seem to emphasize the number, but the difficulty of getting the prize in the running game. Paul demonstrates the value of winning the game by describing one winner. In this sense, Hullinger summarizes his investigation into Paul's running metaphor with two points as follows:

First, the dedicated Christian life consists not in a passive 'letting go and letting God.' Instead it requires an earnest, consistent striving, fueled by the grace of God. Second, being disqualified from reward is a real possibility for every believer. Thus the child of God must be careful to strive according to the rules (II Tim 2:5) in order to receive rewards from the Lord.<sup>49</sup>

Paul's emphasis on one winner, however, is generalized in his later comment in

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<sup>47</sup> Fisk, 60.

<sup>48</sup> Horsely comments, "Although the emphasis in verse 24 is not on competition, or that only one receives the prize, Paul is undoubtedly appealing to the Corinthians' competitive concern for attaining high status." Richard A. Horsley, *I Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 133.

<sup>49</sup> Hullinger, 359.

v.25b. Paul uses the plural to describe the potential winners as 'we' who will receive the laurel lasting forever. In v.25b, Paul abruptly and ironically points out the glory that distinguishes the eternal laurel from the worldly laurel. Through this truth, Paul designates his congregation as on the right track as believers who will finally win the prize.

In succession, Paul confesses that he is the person who has struggled to win life. Paul mentions that he has lived for a clear purpose and for salvation of himself (v.26-27). In a sense, Paul suggests his life as a role model.<sup>50</sup> Paul strongly shows his life as if he is a winner of running games. Seen superficially, Paul seems to be puffed up by his life. However, Paul makes himself humble admitting that he has to be watchful that he "will not be disqualified for the prize" (v.27b). The important point is that Paul uses the present tense of verbs like 'run', 'fight', 'treat severely' demonstrating that his endeavor as he races for the glory of an everlasting laurel is a present continuous one rather than an already finished task.

Paul's running metaphor eventually ends with the reference to his life. Paul shows that he himself is doing his best as a missionary preaching the Gospel, not just saying words but also practicing what he preaches. Roman Garrison also comments on Paul's self reference relating to his self-discipline. Garrison writes,

Paul has been subjected to the harsh discipline of being an apostle. In this he has gained *autarkeia* and in the severe testing of his abilities he has conquered...Consequently, Paul is bold enough to offer himself as one who is worthy of imitation. His own self-control is demonstrated in the willing, even eager, refusal to insist on his own rights and privileges and his voluntary sacrifice of his freedom (I Cor 9:1,12,15, 19:2 Thess 3:7-9).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> John Coolidge Hurd, Jr. points out I Cor 11:1 as a parallel point of I Cor 9:26-27, which is written as "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ." Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians*, new ed. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 130. Paul suggests himself as a model, but he shows it with humble confession as written in v.27b not in an arrogant way.

<sup>51</sup> Garrison, 213.

In sum, Paul's adaptive description of one runner is to emphasize the difficulty and importance of believers' endeavor in their lifetime even though they were accepted as members of the church, the body of Christ. In his use of the term 'we,' Paul identified the Corinthian congregation as runners for the everlasting value. After finishing the running metaphor, he applies this metaphor to his life in order to encourage the Corinthian congregation's involvement in an ideal Christian life represented by self-discipline.

### Homiletic Reflection on the Running Metaphor

First, Paul's standard of picking an example is always related to his congregation's lives. Paul considers choosing his example stories in view of their familiarity to the congregation. Paul chooses the running metaphor, which reflects historical events in Greco-Roman culture. Paul uses the congregation's experiences as communicational means and employs these experiences to show the way of achieving a successful Christian life.

For preachers who select example stories, they need to survey which example stories can best connect with their congregations. Preachers who use strange example stories from different cultures, will need to provide many explanations for the congregation's understanding. Thus, preachers need to deal with their example stories in view of their congregation's experiences and knowledge in order to maximize the congregation's acceptability and application to their lives.

The second thing I want to attend to is Paul's usage of himself as a role model. Margaret M. Mitchell comments that "we still have not discussed what is the single most pervasive deliberative example employed throughout the letter - Paul's use of himself as the example of proper behavior. Twice in the letter Paul explicitly tells the Corinthians to

imitate him.”<sup>52</sup> In his running metaphor, Paul shows his life as a model, which the Corinthian congregation should follow. Paul often writes his life experiences in his letters such as self-discipline in the running metaphor, enduring harsh ordeals (II Cor 11:23-28) or his mystical experiences in II Cor 12:1-10 together with his illness called the ‘thorn in the flesh’ and so on. Paul’s many references to himself seem to be related to his painful experiences. Thus, Paul’s reference to ‘follow me’ needs to be understood under these painful experiences which he confronts during his mission period.

The more important thing is that his emphasis of trials or self-discipline is naturally connected with the passion of Christ on the cross. This is proved by understanding Paul’s words concerning Christ. Paul mentions in I Cor 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” Paul primarily confesses that he has lived according to Jesus Christ’s life. Paul said that as I did, you the Corinthians should do. Paul’s expression, “follow me” is not a pompous injunction, but, an exhortation for the Corinthians to live as Christ lives because the believers’ final imitation is toward Christ, according to Paul’s argument. In Cor 15:31, Paul says that “I die everyday - I mean that, brothers - just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord.”<sup>53</sup> Paul boasts of dying on the cross as Jesus lives a sacrificial life for salvation of all human beings. Thus, Paul’s reference to himself as a role model needs to be understood in the background of his enthusiastic and true devotion to follow the life of Jesus Christ.

There is another reason for Paul’s reference of himself as a role model. Paul

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<sup>52</sup> Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 49-50. Mitchell adds that “In the rest of the letter Paul proposes his example as a norm in each of the problems handled... Because the appeal to himself as example is the unifying rhetorical strategy of the letter, enumerating and describing Paul’s self-references in I Corinthians almost amounts to a summary of the contents of the letter.”

<sup>53</sup> Paul also confesses in Gal 6:14, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”



realizes that he needs to suggest a concrete model for the Corinthian congregation. Paul also wants the congregation to live as role models in a pagan city. Even though Jesus Christ is the final model to follow, there were no guide books or references at that time except some eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ and oral traditions. Thus, for Paul, as one who proclaims the gospel, he needed to model the Christian life for the Corinthian believers. In the Greco-Roman background, there are many heroes or gods whom the people could imitate. In that situation, Paul needs to suggest an ideal life not ambiguously, but clearly to the Corinthian congregation. Furthermore, there are many controversial issues in Corinthians such as keeping the Jewish law, idol-food, marriage, etc. Confronting many concrete issues of the Corinthian congregation, Paul wanted to show a clear direction for their lives. Thus, Paul chose to be a role model who helps the Corinthians to navigate through the challenges or temptations in the Greco-Roman pagan city. In this sense, Paul's suggestion of his life as a model is done in the context of an urgent situation. Additionally, his active expression as a role model lets his congregation members reflect or correct their lives to become role models to non-believers or other believers. Paul implicitly reveals that the Corinthian congregation members should become role models to their neighbors or newcomers of the congregation as Paul became a role model of Christian living to the Corinthian congregation.

Seeing Paul's intention, contemporary church leaders need to understand themselves as role models within their churches. Contemporary congregation members are often confused by contemporary issues, which are not treated by the general lessons of the Scripture. Of course, those problems can be solved by appropriate reinterpretation, but this is not enough for the congregation. Church members also rely on the example

and modeling behavior of their spiritual leaders. They are often deeply impressed by their pastors' preaching when it demonstrates the pastors' trustful commitment of God's words and commands. In this regard, preaching needs not only to interpret or reinterpret texts, but also invite the congregation to decide according to God's calling or command. They need to change their lives from pursuing the worldly values to heavenly values by being motivated by the pastors' confessions of their enthusiastic and honest lives in front of God. Thus, if the preachers evaluate sincerely their own life experiences, they can share their lives' stories in order to encourage the congregation to live true Christian lives.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Use of Example Stories in the Sermons of Two Preachers in Korea**

While narratives or example stories are crucial sources in inductive preaching, they are also important for deductive preaching. Most Korean preachers use the deductive method of preaching rather than preaching inductively. Two famous Korean preachers who will be studied use the method of deductive preaching, but they use example stories as very effective means to demonstrate the main point of their sermons.

This chapter examines the use of example stories by two famous Korean preachers: Samhwan Kim of the Myungsung Presbyterian Church and Dongwon Lee of the Ziguchon Church. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze their sermons in order to discern what characteristics they might have in common. For this, I will concentrate on a few example stories from their sermons and divide them into categories. Each preacher has some distinctive elements in their stories as well as in their sermons. Just as I analyzed a few of the analogies and metaphors used in Paul's writings, I will scrutinize the two selected preachers' example stories in order to ascertain their distinct characteristics as well as the characteristics of their sermons.

#### **Characteristics of Samhwan Kim's Sermons**

There are a variety of views among church growth scholars and pastors about the rapid growth of Myungsung Presbyterian Church, which is pastored by Samhwan Kim. Kim himself emphasizes his righteous and sincere life before God. He confesses as follows:

I did not know this truth. I just knew that my church would grow if I did my best to preach the gospel to non-Christians and to preach excellent sermons. However, I realized that I needed to change my clothes to the righteous clothes God desires. If everyone

receives a blessing from God, he/she will turn from his/her life of wrongdoings.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Kim emphasizes his endeavor to live a good life as a pastor as the most important reason for the growth of his church. Nevertheless, many people attribute the growth and the revival of the Myungsung Church to Kim's impressive sermons.

Kim's sermons are distinct from the sermons of other preachers in Korea in several ways. First, Rev. Kim's sermons do not follow the typical structural framework for sermons. Most preachers use a fixed structure consisting of three or four main points to support the main topic of their sermon. However, Kim does not use this framework to develop his argument. For example, in his sermon on the theme of "God's grace for the person who throws away his/her stone," he had eleven main points, not the standard three or four points to which other preachers usually limit themselves<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, Kim employs a variety of communicational techniques to develop rapport and to maintain the interest and attentiveness of the hearers. He often makes his congregation laugh by telling jokes or engaging in funny maneuvers. For example, when he tells sad stories or confesses his sins, he frequently moistens his eyes with eye drops during preaching. By using humor, he puts his congregation at ease so that they are receptive to his preaching.

Third, Rev. Kim makes himself vulnerable by openly and honestly sharing his thoughts and personal experiences with the congregation. He tells stories about his private life, including many of his ministerial experiences. When he shares stories even

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<sup>1</sup> Samhwan Kim, *Nothing More Precious Than the Church* (Seoul: Siloam, 2004), 41-42.

<sup>2</sup> Samhwan Kim, "God's grace for the person who throws away his/her stone" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 20 Aug. 2006; available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 23 Apr. 2006.

about his family, he frankly tells what happened, even if some parts of the stories are very shameful. Kim often confesses his wrongdoings in front of all his congregation. He always tries to humbly open himself up to his listeners when he preaches.

Fourth, Rev. Kim uses hymns or gospel songs to highlight the themes of his sermons. In the middle of a sermon, he often sings a song or sometimes urges his congregation to sing with him. He intentionally uses the element of church music to support his messages because, by choosing songs that are tightly related to the themes of his sermons, he reinforces each message he is trying to convey. Rev. Kim regards church music as a valuable element in his sermons.

Finally, through his sermons Rev. Kim wants to reveal Jesus Christ, who offers salvation to all humanity. He deals with the weakness and sinfulness of human beings, including his own mistakes or sins, and tries to make his congregation humble and absolutely reliant on Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> Thus, his sermons always seem to be pointed toward the gospel message, so non-Christians can easily understand the truth of Christianity. Based on the gospel, his sermons always emphasize humility. Rev. Kim strongly recognizes that human beings are nothing without God's help. This conviction is demonstrated in his sermons, which often mention his ministerial experiences. By telling stories from his own life, Rev. Kim makes his sermons powerful and relevant to his congregants.

#### A Critique of Samhwan Kim's Sermons

Rev. Kim seems to emphasize the materialistic aspects of being faithful Christians,

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<sup>3</sup> Samhwan Kim, "A Nation without Beggars" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 15 Sep. 2006; available at <[http://www.mscho.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.mscho.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 27 Aug. 2006.

and he also speaks at great length about spiritual blessings. For example, on Aug 27, 2006, he preached on the theme of “a nation without beggars.” He spoke as follows:

There is a beggar in this text (Mark 10:46-52). There are levels of beggars according to their situations. Bartimaeus is an extreme beggar of the lowest level. He became blind and alienated from his family. However, he is saved and given grace by Jesus Christ and finally lives a blessed life because of God’s love and superfluous grace. Human beings cannot cure blindness, although they can give money to the blind, but Jesus Christ gives the beggar clothes of righteousness and faith to wear and a blessed life to live, allowing the beggar to take off his cloak, instead of curing the man’s blindness. There are some people who criticize wealth, viewing it as a negative thing. But they just see the worst examples of wealthy people. However, things are not like that. Abraham was a rich person, and Jacob and Joseph and the twelve tribes were given great material blessings. They did not become bad people when they became rich. They glorified God by becoming wealthy. God loves us, so God saves us from poverty, judgment, and curses, like God did in Bartimaeus’ case. There is no tragedy like poverty. A human being cannot do anything if he/she is poor. Poor people cannot eat, wear clothing, or acquire knowledge. Poor nations cannot help people live long lives because they have no money to cure their diseases. . . In poor countries, people with disabilities might have many difficulties because their countries cannot afford to take care of people with disabilities. How can poor countries take care of people with disabilities instead of healthy people? The poor cannot serve their parents or get their children good education. . . Our country gained material blessings after receiving the gospel 120 years ago. North Korea is poor. One hundred percent of the nations without faith in God are absolutely poor. The nations with faith are absolutely rich, such as Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, the U.K., Sweden, Germany, the U.S.A, Canada, Australia, Austria. . . I hope that you can wear the clothes of faith and be saved by taking off your Bartimaeus cloak.<sup>4</sup>

In this sermon, Kim shows his views on poverty and wealth. He emphasizes that Christians should be liberated from poverty along with being given spiritual salvation. Thus, he interprets Bartimaeus’ new life as having two aspects: one is salvation and the second is material riches. However, the text does not mention that Bartimaeus became a rich person after meeting Jesus Christ.

Another thing to criticize about Kim’s sermon is that he mistakenly associates Christian faith with a country’s being or becoming wealthy. For example, Japan is one of

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<sup>4</sup> Samhwan Kim, “A Nation without Beggars” [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 15 Sep. 2006, available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 27 Aug. 2006.

the most technologically advanced countries in the world, but it is not a primarily Christian nation. Thus, Rev. Kim's argument that poor countries are non-Christian and rich countries are Christian is not correct. Also, Kim's argument does not address the issue of theodicy and does not theologically reflect the suffering that believers experience.

### Characteristics of Example Stories in Samhwan Kim's Sermons

There are many kinds of example stories in Samhwan Kim's sermons. They fall into four categories: Bible stories, personal stories, stories related to Korean traditions and culture, and stories about natural phenomena. First, Kim uses stories or verses from the Bible to support his sermon topics. He always strengthens his sermon messages by using verses or stories from the Bible related to the themes of his sermons.

Second, Kim shares episodes or events from his own life. Rev. Kim has an ability to relate experiences from his life to the experiences of his congregants. In other words, Kim has a spectacular capacity to connect his special ministerial experiences or episodes from his life with the common experiences of members of his congregation. Thus, he frequently reveals details of his life to his congregation in order to highlight the themes of his sermons. He confesses his immature faith in his earlier ministry in his sermon titled, "The Blessing of a Person Serving in the Church." In this sermon, he says, "I was called by God at a young age, so I began my ministry earlier than other pastors. However, I had thought that I had better give up my ministry when I turned thirty years old. At that time, I mistakenly assumed that I could get a good job if I entered into the world after quitting my ministry."<sup>5</sup> It is so difficult for a senior pastor to reveal his mistakes in the conservative church culture of Korea. However, Rev. Kim reveals even

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<sup>5</sup> Samhwan Kim, *Nothing More Precious Than the Church*, 25.

his flaws and mistakes to his congregation in order for his listeners to connect with and be impacted by his sermons. Rev. Kim reveals his weaknesses without hesitation. In his sermon of September 10, 2006, he says the following:

Human beings are not trustful. Human beings can be felt as burdens to others. Human beings live their lives according to their desires. This is the first time I have shared the following story about my family. . . My family had a small business farming red peppers. My father had many sisters; they were all rich. Surprisingly, once when they visited my home, they only brought us our own cultivated red pepper, despite their richness. What if they had brought their poor brother, my father, some rice? But they did not. I had never seen that kind of behavior.<sup>6</sup>

In this sermon, Kim picks a story about his own family. In fact, this might be a story to be carefully dealt with because some persons he mentions negatively in this story could be damaged by it. However, Rev. Kim openly reveals his feelings and reflections about the events he experienced. Conveying his message is more important to him than is keeping secrets about his family. In other words, Rev. Kim demonstrates that the selfishness of human beings is a serious matter not to be disregarded just because of the intensity of the relationship between the preacher and others. Rev. Kim is frank with his congregation despite the risks of revealing his private life.<sup>7</sup>

Rev. Kim rarely hides his private life for the sake of saving face for himself or

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<sup>6</sup> Samhwan Kim, "Jesus is Rich" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 12 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 10 Sep. 2006.

Kim shares many stories about himself: He confessed to the sin of gambling in order to emphasize the theme, "Do not love the world," in his sermon on January 16, 2005. He tells how this mother bought good clothes for his family in spite of their poverty in order to demonstrate his mother's love for him in his sermon on February 13, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Kim also reflects on the weakness of human beings by sharing a story from the time period during which he started his church. "Twenty six years ago, I had serious financial difficulties. Nevertheless, I supported others having difficulties from a sincere heart. One person stayed at my house for free for a few months. However, those people whom I had helped never helped me when I became poor due to the founding of my church. . . . In retrospect, I think that if they had helped me, I would not have relied on God or prayed to Him. On the contrary, because I was rejected by everyone I trusted, I became a person who absolutely relies on God." Samhwan Kim, *Early Morning Tear: Early Morning Revival Story of Rev. Samhwan Kim of Myungsung Church* (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 2006), 39-40.



others. Instead, he is more concerned that his congregation understands his sermons so he will tell whatever stories he knows in order to obtain this goal. This tendency to reveal details of his life is evident in his sermon from April. 30, 2006. To illustrate the theme of faith, he shares the story of marrying his wife.

When I got married to my wife, it was because she chose me. My wife's family is rich, so many people wanted to contact my wife in order to marry her. However, my wife had a hope and a goal to marry a young man who had faith, rather than a good-looking or rich person, in order to have a family that believed in God. So, she had met me, and we became intimate with each other. At first, I kept secret from her my poor family background, but the pangs of conscience caused me to repent. I told her, "I have a poor family, and we live in a rural district. There is no room for us to live there after we get married. I have twelve family members living in just two rooms, and there are six sisters among them who need to be cared for. How can I get married to you now?" My wife responded to me, "How can those be obstacles to marrying me? I think that it is important to believe in God as children of Him. Is there any relationship between having six sisters and living in faith? I only hope that God will bless us. If you love me, I have no problem with being married to you."<sup>8</sup>

Rev. Kim is courageous to choose these kinds of stories as illustrations for his sermon in order to more effectively persuade his congregation. To influence congregants' thinking, even his shameful or negative experiences are used. Thus, it is natural for the members of the congregation to feel the sincerity and open-heartedness with which Kim preaches and to come to trust him as well as his messages.

Among the many revealing stories Rev. Kim uses, the stories of his difficulties during the process of developing his mega-church are viewed as the most challenging and admirable stories he tells his congregation. Rev. Kim often mentions the condition of his church at the time it was founded. In his September 4, 2006 sermon, he tells the following:

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<sup>8</sup> Samhwan Kim, "Look the pious ancestors" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 27 Sep. 2006; available at <[http://www.msich.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msich.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 30 Apr. 2006.

When I founded this church in 1980, I just had seventy manwon (about seven hundred dollars). I could not collect one hundred manwon (about one thousand dollars), even though I asked for help collecting that money. Thus, I had difficulties because I had such a small amount of money. . . . I slept in the church because I had no money to rent a house for my family. I stayed in the church's service room and prayed eagerly all night, sitting or lying on a chair without sleeping, for the support of God. After a few months of doing this, I was moved by God's inspiration. The message I heard was, "Do not pray by yourself, but gather some people to pray with you." After hearing this voice, I set the next month, September, as a special early morning prayer month and went around on a bicycle to let the neighbors know this news. I had prayed that God would send me twenty-five persons who would pray with me. I had decided that I specifically needed twenty-five persons to pray with me. I believed that if there were members committed to praying for the church, my church would revive. On the first day of the special early prayer month, September, I was surprised after I counted twenty-five persons gathered in the church. This was a miraculous thing at that time. I was convinced that nothing is impossible if we pray. Until now, I have prayed with this belief. As you know, everyone ignored me, but God raised my hands and responded to our praying.<sup>9</sup>

Kim frequently uses the process of the development of his church as evidence of God's involvement in his life, giving his church as well as him power and grace. His use of confessional stories has influential power on the members of his congregation because of the stories' applicability to the diverse members' lives and jobs. Kim's experiential confessions eventually become a model for his congregants to emulate.

Third, Rev. Kim uses many story illustrations based on Korean traditions in order to help his congregants get the points of his sermons. In his sermon of Sep. 3, 2006, Kim shares the following:

Blessing does not come from human beings. Our country's ancestors said that it is unlucky to meet a woman in the morning. Most adults say this is true. In fact, it is lucky to meet the woman, but they say it is strange. Isn't it? Some taxi drivers also complain that a female customer in the morning is ominous. We have heard this too many times. But, how ridiculous is this? A woman born in the Year of the Horse could not marry well. Someone said that a woman born in that year should be beaten. Are there some women who have been damaged by that bad tradition? If you believe in Jesus Christ, everyone is good to us, regardless of their birth year or what kind of person they are. We

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<sup>9</sup> Samhwan Kim, "The House Whose Windows are Open" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 2 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.mscho.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.mscho.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 3 Sep. 2006.

don't care about the date of marriage. God rules our lives, so all these uncontrollable conditions are not important. All things are up to God.<sup>10</sup>

By using this story illustration, Rev. Kim urges the congregation to rely on God, not on traditional Korean maxims. Additionally, Kim criticizes the negative discrimination directed toward Korean woman that is embedded in Korean folklore. Thus, he achieves two purposes by using an illustration based on traditional Korean stories. One is a theological purpose: Only God is trustworthy. The second is an educational purpose: Women have equal rights with men.

Another example of Rev. Kim's interest in traditional Korean stories references military life:

If a young man joins the army, he generally stands guard for two hours without sleeping. The time period for standing guard is from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., so every soldier has to choose two hours during this eight-hour time block. By the way, senior soldiers usually choose the time between ten to twelve or four to six, because they can sleep undisturbed either after their duty ends or before their duty begins. Thus this time period is called the "Golden Time." Persons who have experienced military life might know the meaning of this. . . . How about us? We spiritual soldiers should experience this Golden Time. We can pursue this Golden Time by praying early every morning. God also give us the chance to choose this Golden Time every day. Is it proper to give up God's gift of Golden Time to us?<sup>11</sup>

Kim knows that military issues grab the attention of all Korean people. Even though Korean women do not experience military service unless they volunteer to be soldiers, they might be interested in this job as mothers or wives or friends of soldiers. All Korean men experience military service in some way, except those who are disqualified for service. Furthermore, stories about soldiers' lives, like standing guard, can evoke

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<sup>10</sup> Samhwan Kim, "The House Whose Windows are Open" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 2 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.mscho.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.mscho.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 3 Sep. 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Samhwan Kim, *Early Morning Tear: Early Morning Revival Story of Rev. Samhwan Kim of Myungsung Church* (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 2006), 114-5.

curiosity among the congregants because this is a subject of adventure and intrigue. In his sermon, Rev. Kim shared some interesting information with the congregational members who have not had the experience of standing guard, while he offered those familiar with the guarding system a new perspective on it. Rev. Kim applies the core theme of “Golden Time” from this story to the early morning prayer discipline, because the meeting time for Korean early morning prayer is usually the same as the military guard’s “Golden Time.” Rev. Kim creatively uses an example story from the military as an effective way to urge congregants to join the early morning prayer meeting.<sup>12</sup>

Fourth, Rev. Kim uses many scientific truths or principles observable in natural phenomena to illustrate his main points. He often mentions plant or animal phenomena.

In his May 1, 2006 sermon, he talks about pine trees:

The pine tree has many pinecones. This is because it is in the nature of the pine tree to reproduce itself as much as possible. Generally, there are many pinecones on one pine tree – anywhere from a few thousand to tens of thousands. This is because the pine tree desires to multiply itself throughout the earth. Our God in heaven wants His children to live well, to receive blessings, and to flourish on earth. This is God’s desire. We should realize God’s hope.<sup>13</sup>

Rev. Kim observes the unique character of pine trees as compared to other trees. The most interesting thing is that Rev. Kim personifies the pine tree as if it can think about its future in the same way human beings do. Thus, Rev. Kim connects the characteristics of

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<sup>12</sup> Rev. Kim often cites Korean military stories. In his sermon on “The Will of Our God in Heaven,” he tells a story about the training school of the Korean military. At the end of the story, he mentions that he strongly recommended that his son enter the military forces, while he criticizes some people who try to get their sons exempted illegally. He finally emphasizes the necessity of training believers as soldiers are trained. *Nothing More Precious Than The Lord*, 322-3.

<sup>13</sup> Samhwan Kim, “Brave Person Who has Faith” [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 2 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.mscho.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.mscho.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 7 May. 2006.

pine trees with God's desire for God's children. He develops an insightful idea based on his thoughtful observation of nature.

Kim's usage of story illustrations from nature is also evident in his sermon of May 7, 2005.

There is a famous park in Kenya, Africa called Masaimara. This is such a big park that it stretches into the next country, Tanzania, and its name is changed to Serengeti. . . . This park is several times larger than our country. A few million animals live in this area. The rainy season is different according to what region of the park one is in. During a period of six months, animals usually migrate from Masaimara to Serengeti or from Serengeti to Masaimara according to the rainy seasons. Zebras, water buffalos, deer, and gnus are there. These herds used to travel within a 10 km wide swath. On the way from Masaimara to Serengeti, there is a river called "mara," which is flooded during the rainy season. During this season, a lot of crocodiles wait for the animals to cross this river. Among a herd of gnus that was waiting to cross the river, one gnu led them. Although it was a dangerous situation, most of the gnus recognized the need to follow the decision of the leading gnu. Once the captain gnu moved, the rest of the gnus followed their leader and jumped into the swiftly flowing river full of threatening crocodiles. Actually, they have to cross this river in order to survive, because they cannot live six months without eating. The person who has the faith to make brave decisions will live and will bring life to his/her family and neighbors. If we live idle lives, we will perish.<sup>14</sup>

Rev. Kim studies the deed of the captain gnu in Africa, specifically noting the gnu's brave decision. Rev. Kim connects this story with the decisions of believers and then exhorts his congregants to decide to live faithful lives. The noteworthy thing about this story illustration is that Kim makes this story very dramatic and picturesque in order to draw in the congregation's attention.

Rev. Kim often cites the nature of animals. In his sermon from Sep. 24, 2006, he speaks about hunting dogs' natural capacities for hunting tigers.<sup>15</sup> He mentions that hunting dogs cannot compete with tigers, but as long as they have reliable masters with

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<sup>14</sup> Samhwan Kim, "Brave Person Who has Faith" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 2 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 7 May. 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Samhwan Kim, "My Lord, My God" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 21 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 24 Sep. 2006.

rifles following them, they can successfully hunt tigers.<sup>16</sup> Rev. Kim reminds his congregation of the Master of believers, God, by telling this story. He connects the hunting dogs' limitations with believers' limitations. Rev. Kim argues, "There is no human being who can succeed based just on his/her own abilities. Do you think that we are powerful? We will fail if we depend on ourselves."<sup>17</sup> Rev. Kim creatively and insightfully observes certain phenomena or objects and draws analogies from them that apply to spiritual issues. Thus, natural phenomena are a good source for him for stories for his sermons.

#### Characteristics of Dongwon Lee's Sermons

Dongwon Lee is regarded as the most famous preacher in Korea. Rev. Lee's sermons are primarily characterized by his exegetical preaching, which involves insightful analysis of the concepts, ideas, or stories of a text. Rev. Lee never deviates from the text he works with in each sermon. He always urges his congregation to read the chosen text together with him during the sermon. This is his methodology, which reflects his hope that his congregation will stick to the text. In this way, Lee uncovers important spiritual meanings from a text and shares with his congregation.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, Rev. Lee's sermons always follow the framework of three points under one main topic. These points usually relate to how to achieve the main topic or are concrete explanations for the topic. Thus, Rev. Kim's sermons are very polished and are structured to make an impression on his congregation.

Third, Rev. Lee logically develops his sermons by following a systematic

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Samhwan Kim, "My Lord, My God" [online sermon of Myungsung Presbyterian Church]; accessed 21 Oct. 2006; available at <[http://www.msch.or.kr/03\\_msitv/sermon.html](http://www.msch.or.kr/03_msitv/sermon.html)>. 24 Sep. 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Rev. Lee deals with his chosen text without citing other Bible texts or stories as illustrations for his sermon topic. Rev. Kim, however, cites many Bible verses or stories that can support his chosen text.

arrangement. Specifically, Lee often begins and ends his sermons with stories that illustrate his main idea.<sup>19</sup> He shares one impressive or challenging story before developing his main idea using his three-point format. He concludes by summarizing the argument of his sermon using a relevant story. Therefore, it is very difficult to understand Rev. Lee's preaching without studying the story illustrations he uses in his preaching. Lee is always a good storyteller. His preaching is sometimes serious, sometimes joyful, sometimes humorous. The tones of his sermons are set by the stories he tells. Nevertheless, his stories never depart from the meanings of the texts he chooses.

Finally, Rev. Lee often stimulates the congregation's imagination by asking some serious or mysterious questions. He directs his congregation to think about the answers to questions along with him. In the part of the sermon that commissions the congregation or asks them to respond to God's command, Rev. Lee chooses words that offer advice or encouragement, rather than words that are coercive. He urges his congregation to pray together with him after he finishes his sermon.

#### A Critique of Dongwon Lee's Sermons

Dongwon Lee likes to use English terms frequently. Of course, the Ziguchon Church is located in the region of Bundang, which is famous for its rich residents. Thus,

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<sup>19</sup> Rev. Lee's type of sermon is not a way of forcing his congregation to follow his directives, but his method is a way of gently persuading his congregation by using impressive and appropriate example stories. A well-organized sermon that consists of some proper stories might be concluded by using a example story. It is better for preachers to end their sermons by using a certain type of story. This is the typical method in Rev. Lee's case. Frank G. Honeycutt argues as follows: "Sermons can be an invitation to discover the truth of Christ, rather than force-feeding such truth. . . . One of the main tasks in preaching to seekers is to open only enough of the story so as to help them find intersection in their own lives. God's word will do the rest if we don't kill it by overly offering an 'expert' explanation." Frank G. Honeycutt, *Preaching to Skeptics and Seekers* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 154-55. "Allowing listeners to finish the sermon" is a very important method for modern Korean people who do not like being forced to be obedient to someone, even a preacher. Thus, preaching through storytelling can help a congregation feel comfortable and think imaginatively about a sermon. Even though preachers can argue some themes in their preaching, this can be done in a way that allows their congregations to have room to think for themselves.

most of the congregational members' educational backgrounds are high enough to know the meaning of common English words. However, this is not a legitimate reason to use English terms, because there are still some non-educated persons in the congregation. The language of the sermons should be easily understood by all the members of the congregation. In his sermon of Aug. 20, 2006, Rev. Lee refers to a book written by an American author:

I had introduced the book, *The Present*, which was written by a bestselling author, Spencer Johnson. The main characters of this book are a boy and an old man. The old man told the boy to look for a precious present by himself without telling him what that present was. However, the boy is unable to find that present until he grows up. One day, when the boy was an adult, he was depressed by his failure to be promoted in his company, so he visited the old man again and asked him what the present was. However, the old man still does not reveal what it is, but instead asks the boy to remember the happiest time in his life. In that moment, the man suddenly realizes the identity of the present. The present is this moment, the present.<sup>20</sup>

Rev. Lee suggests the importance of the present moment by telling this story from a piece of literature. "Present" can have two meanings, and this dual meaning can make this story illustration beautiful and poetic. However, the meaning of the story can be confusing to non-educated church members who do not know very much English. Even though this story can effectively convey Lee's point to some people, it will be difficult for other people to understand. The language of a preacher should be clear enough for everyone who participates in a worship service to understand.

#### Characteristics of Example Stories in Dongwon Lee's Sermons

The example stories Dongwon Lee uses in his sermons distinguish his sermons from other preachers'. Rev. Lee's preaching style is to always allow his congregation to think and feel for themselves. The example stories he uses have five distinctive

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<sup>20</sup> Dongwon Lee, "Peace of Sprit"[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 3 Oct. 2006; available at <<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 20 Aug. 2006.



characteristics: they primarily come from books he has read; they are often biographical accounts focused on one incident in a famous person's life; they include direct quotes and dialogue; they usually include a dramatic reversal or unexpected conclusion; and many are drawn from recent events.

First, Rev. Lee primarily depends on books as sources for his example stories. These books cover all areas of literature: biography, history, theology, and so on. It seems that Lee prefers to draw upon characters and stories from books he has read for his story illustrations. He is known to others as a widely read person and as one who has excellent insight for choosing helpful stories that are relevant to the themes of his sermons.

Second, Rev. Lee frequently concentrates on a historical character whose life continues to have a great impact on other people. He usually introduces biographical information about the person and then shares an incident that happened to that person that can be helpful for understanding the theme of his sermon. In his July 9, 2006 sermon, Rev. Lee begins by sharing the story of a Korean person who overcame his disabilities and despair:

One boy who had emigrated to America with his parents hoped to become a gold medalist as a Korean gymnast at the Olympic Games. When he was fifteen years old, this dream seemed to be becoming a reality, because he was selected to join the Parkettes National Gymnastics Training Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania as one of its promising athletes. However, two days before his eighteenth birthday, on July 4, 1983, he fell while practicing a 360-degree somersault with a midair twist. He landed on his chin, and the impact crushed his spinal cord, leaving him a quadriplegic. His disability confined him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. He was sentenced to death as a gymnast, because he would never be able to move like that again. His dream seemed to disappear. He should have responded to his tragic destiny with grief for his life. . . God rescued this young man from the valley of grief and made him a hero of our times. He became the top medical specialist of rehabilitative medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine after graduating from Dartmouth Medical School and serving an internship at Harvard Medical School. He who cares for patients while riding in a wheelchair became a symbol of hope to every rehabilitation patient. His name is Lee, Seung-bok, the author

of the famous book, *The Miracle Lies Within You*.<sup>21</sup>

To show a case of recovering from despair, Rev. Lee picks up the dramatic life story of one person. The way he tells this story is intentionally dramatic. For example, Rev. Lee mentions that the day of the accident was “two days before his eighteenth birthday.” He also expresses the painful situation as a “valley of grief.” The power of the story is heightened by Rev. Lee’s excellent storytelling skills. However, Lee never distorts a story. He examines the dramatic elements of a story by researching its background. Rev. Lee is also skillful at summarizing a person’s life in a few significant scenes.<sup>22</sup>

Third, Rev. Lee frequently emphasizes some dialogue or specific quotes as important elements in his story illustrations. In his sermon of September 10, 2006, Rev. Lee begins as follows:

During my youth, one of the most impressive books I read was *I and Thou*, by Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher. In this book, Buber points out that the relationships among modern people are “I and It” relationships. Buber mentions that the ideal relationship between human beings is not a relationship of “I and it,” but of “I and Thou.” Martin Buber liked to read books too much, so he confessed, “I cannot live without books. It is God’s blessing for me to read books for a few days without being interrupted by others, but this is motivated by the idea that I can spend time with a person after I am done reading.” Martin Buber was originally devoted to the Zionist movement, but was later disappointed after seeing Jewish persons’ inhumane attitudes toward Arab people. Buber finally abandoned Zionism and devoted himself to working for peaceful relationships between Jews and Arabs. As a result, Buber was opposed by many Jewish people, but he embraced them with love. Buber had a major conflict with Ben Gurion because of their political positions. However, Ben Gurion, the prime minister, sent a message to Buber on his eighty-fifth birthday that said, “I oppose you; I honor you.” When Buber was asked why he lived a life of respecting others, he said, pointing to the heavens, “We are all beings created in the image of the Eternal Thou.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Dongwon Lee, “When Passing the Tear Valley”[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 8 Sep.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 9 July. 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Rev. Lee does not reveal the subject’s name at the beginning of the story. This strategy can be observed in another story he tells about a well-known person.

<sup>23</sup> Dongwon Lee, “A Woman Caught in Adultery”[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 6 Oct.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 10 Sep. 2006.

Rev. Lee shares the precise content of dialogue that is part of the story he is telling. He directly quotes sentences from a book or conversation and highlights them while he develops a person's story. In his September 3, 2006 sermon, Rev. Lee shares a story from the life of Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

A healthy ego is created, not by pursuing oneself, but by helping and caring for neighbors in need. When Mother Teresa was on tour, she met a woman. This woman confessed that she had been counseled by many people, but the counseling was not helpful. She continued to say to Teresa, "I am thinking about suicide." After hearing this woman, Teresa suggested, "How about postponing your decision to commit suicide and coming to India to help me just for a month?" This woman accepted Teresa's proposal. One month later, Teresa met this woman again. The woman was smiling and had become a different person. Teresa said, "When will you kill yourself?" The woman responded, "Kill myself? I have a reason to live. I wanted to die when I lived just for myself. However, I am alive when I look around at my neighbors." If you want to live, turn your eyes to others.<sup>24</sup>

Rev. Lee uses the modern story of Mother Teresa as a corollary to a Biblical story about a centurion, the main character of his sermon. He shares the episode. Lee highlights the dialogue that already exists in his stories and narrates them in a dramatic and interesting manner and this contributes to sermons that are dynamic and impressive.

Fourth, Rev. Lee likes to choose stories that have surprising or unexpected conclusions. He focuses on the point in these stories where some dramatic change or shift occurs. In his sermon, "Eye to Eternity," he tells the following story:

In Sunday school, a boy had heard about the kingdom of heaven. He said to his mother, "Mom, I learned that God prepares God's kingdom for us. Is this true?" His mother praised him and told him he was right. Then the son asked his mother curiously, "Why don't you prepare to go to the kingdom of God like you so thoroughly prepared for your trip to New Zealand and Australia?"<sup>25</sup>

This story's dramatic aspect is the boy's pure and frank question to his mother. The mood

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<sup>24</sup> Dongwon Lee, "A Centurion"[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 10 Sep.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 3 Sep. 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Become a Person Who Creates Miracles* (Seoul: Yodan Press, 2004), 165-6.

of the dialogue between the son and his mother is abruptly changed by the son's second question. Rev. Lee does not give the source of this story, so its factual accuracy cannot be corroborated. Nonetheless, this story has value in that it reveals some truths about living unfaithfully. The congregation is not interested in its factuality, but in the message it conveys. The boy's second question brings about a dramatic change in this story, and this leads the congregation to rethink their faith.

Another example story, from his sermon of July 30, 2006 "The Secret of His Name" also shows Rev. Lee's tendency to emphasize dramatic reversals in his stories. In this story, Rev. Lee gives us the name of its subject:

There is a story that is told about the rich man, William Randolph Hearst, who had two jobs: one as publisher of a newspaper and another as a collector of antique art. At one point in his life, he searched for several months, using many agents throughout Europe, in order to find a particular antique art masterpiece, but, come to find out, the masterpiece he was searching for was in his very own storehouse.<sup>26</sup>

The point of this story is that Jesus Christ is already within us. To help his congregation get this point, Rev. Lee selects this story of William Randolph Hearst and highlights the surprising conclusion of "finding the masterpiece close to him, in his own storehouse." This can send a challenging message to believers who try to find value outside the church or Christian truth. After telling this story, he adds his main argument. He says, "The pursuit of knowledge is not bad, but knowledge unrelated to Christ has no meaning for us. Such knowledge can be a waste of time. The answer is Christ. Isn't he already within us?"<sup>27</sup> By sharing this dramatic story, Rev. Lee emphasizes that the modern Christian's endeavor to find answers should begin with Christ, not with the world. It is noteworthy

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<sup>26</sup> Dongwon Lee, "The Secret of His Name"[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 15 Sep.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 30 July. 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

that Lee tries to obtain the congregants' acceptance of his point by asking some serious and challenging questions, even though he has already implicitly suggested the answer at the beginning of his sermon in his example story.

Finally, Rev. Lee likes to choose for his example stories recent events that are known to most people. In his October 15, 2006 sermon, "A Paralytic Becomes Jesus' VIP," Rev. Lee begins by telling the following story:

The desert marathon was first held in the Gobi Desert of China in May 2005. The length of this marathon is two hundred fifty three kilometers, and ninety athletes from twenty-two countries were participating in this seven-day race. This marathon is designed for racers who want to challenge the limitations of human beings. By the way, there were two Korean racers who impressed many reporters. One was Yongsul Lee, a blind man, and the other was Kyungsoo Kim, a government worker. They ran tied to each other around their waists for the entire race. The reporter from *Chosun Il Bo* wrote an article with a title that said something like, "The great friendship."<sup>28</sup>

Rev. Lee shares this recent event to tell a story about friendship. Some current or recent events are good resources for sermon illustrations because they are fresh in congregation members' minds. Rev. Lee does not limit himself to events that include Koreans. In his July 2, 2006 sermon, he shares a story that happened in the United States.

This is a story that happened in March 2005 in the USA. A man wanted by the police approached a woman, Ashley Smith, in the parking lot of her apartment complex and took her into her home, all the while threatening her with a gun. This man was Brian Nichols, who was fleeing the Fulton County Courthouse in Atlanta after taking away a deputy's gun and killing four persons, including a court judge while he was presiding over a trial. The woman, confined by this prisoner, spent seven hours with him in her home. Even though Ashley Smith had her hands and feet tied up, she prayed with a calm attitude and tried to talk with the man. Finally, the man untied her, after her words made an impression on him. The woman asked for his permission to read to him. She read from the Bible and the thirty-second day's reading of the book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, by Rick Warren. The criminal asked about the book she was reading from, and they talked about the purpose of life. The next morning, Ashley made him pancakes and recommended that he surrender himself to the police, while she told him that this was

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<sup>28</sup> Dongwon Lee, "A Paralytic Becomes Jesus' VIP"[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 2 Nov.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 15 Oct. 2006.

God's purpose in their having met. Then, after asking him to let her go see her daughter, Ashley was able to leave, and Nichols was finally arrested by the police with no resistance on his part.<sup>29</sup>

This story is known by many people throughout the world and is used to highlight the courage and faith of the woman and the “impossible possibility” of changing the criminal's obstinate mind. In this sermon, the story serves to emphasize the possibility of human beings' minds being changed by God's words: Lee is careful to include all the events in his example stories that he needs to make connections with the main points in his sermons.

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<sup>29</sup> Dongwon Lee, “Close to God”[online sermon of Jiguchon Church]; accessed 5 Oct.2006; available at<<http://www.jiguchon.org>, homepage of Jiguchon Church>. 2 July. 2006.

## Chapter 5

### Ideal Example Stories Based on Paul's Writings

#### and the Sermons of Two Korean Preachers

Paul's metaphors and analogies offer some helpful insights for contemporary preaching in Korean culture. In view of the strong points of Paul's analogies and metaphors, the example stories of Samhwan Kim and Dongwon Lee can be critiqued. I will compare and contrast the distinctive and beneficial points of Paul's writings with these two Korean preachers' example stories. Based on these reflections, I will suggest how preachers can select example stories for best effect.

#### Example Stories With Short and Clear Images

First, Paul's metaphors and analogies are short enough for listeners to memorize. The common thing among the four story images I investigated in Chapter Three is their brevity. Paul's metaphors and analogies create images that congregants can visualize. Paul is able to convey significant theological concepts or make arguments by using these short example stories.

Joseph Conrad, a novelist, says that his purpose in writing is to help readers hear, feel, and finally see something through written letters.”<sup>1</sup> Conrad's view might be a very important point for the contemporary Korean congregation, because they have become very accustomed to *seeing* scenes in movies or on TV, rather than creating them through their own imaginative response to written or spoken words. Technological developments have caused contemporary Korean congregants to become easily bored with only hearing or reading something. The best way for creating images in persons' minds is to use short

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Preaching and Teaching With Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry*, trans. Zangwoo Lee (Seoul: Yodan Press, 2003), 60.

and easy to follow stories like Paul's analogies and metaphors. Using short example stories may catch the attention of all congregants, regardless of their age or educational background.

Compared with Paul, Samhwan Kim and Dongwon Lee usually use much longer stories than any found in Paul's writings. Rev. Lee in particular likes to tell quite long stories, such as episodes from the lives of historical figures. Using longer stories might quickly lose the attention of his listeners, and the preacher has to be more dramatic so that the listeners will follow it through to the end and get its point.

Furthermore, short example stories are practical for preachers to use because they can be easily memorized. Hearers also do not want to have to struggle to follow a long plot or to figure out the significance of the story for the sermon or for their lives. By using brief example stories, preachers facilitate congregants' comprehension of the core messages of the stories, thereby making them more effective tools for communicating ideas. The importance of brevity is exemplified by TV advertisements. TV ads in Korea get their point across in just twenty or thirty seconds. Richard F. Ward comments about advertisements as follows:

Advertisers have discovered how to use images and sounds to endow ordinary objects with powers of transformation and link them with perceived human needs. Purchasing a product opens the passageway to a fantasy world of unlimited abundance and prosperity.<sup>2</sup>

As Simmons notes, advertisers try to create impressive images that attract viewers' attention in just a few scenes. If the contents and construction of a message are strong, advertisers can achieve their goals in just a short time, with short images. Preachers need

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<sup>2</sup> Richard F. Ward, "Beyond Televangelism: Preaching on the Pathway to Ritual Re-Formation," in *Preaching on the Brink*, ed. Martha J. Simmons (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 119.



to be aware of this strategy in designing their sermons. Preachers are people who persuade their congregations in a limited time, generally from twenty to thirty minutes. In this context, preachers need to refine their example stories to be as brief and effective as possible. To do this, preachers should remove the parts of their stories that are redundant and unnecessary, and instead concentrate on the elements of each story's plot that are most necessary for conveying their main point. Otherwise, they may be perceived as beating around the bush. Additionally, using short example stories can make it easier for preachers to speak freely and comfortably, thereby making their speech more powerful.

#### Example Stories that are Culturally Relevant

As Thomas G. Long says, "We are human beings interacting with what the speaker is saying, sifting it, debating it, adding to it."<sup>3</sup> For ideal communication, preachers should keep in mind their congregants' diverse circumstances, levels of understanding, and interests as they develop their example stories, which are very important sermonic devices. In other words, "Preaching presupposes knowing one's congregation."<sup>4</sup> Preachers should honor their congregants' lives and circumstances by selecting example stories that are helpful and relevant to them. As Don M. Wardlaw argues, preachers should recognize listeners as companions in exploring the word of God.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, preachers' understanding of their congregation's cultures is very important for successful communication between preachers and their congregations.

Paul's metaphors and analogies show his cultural faithfulness. David Buttrick

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas G. Long, *The Senses of Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 59.

<sup>4</sup> Jung Young Lee, *Korean Preaching. An Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 22. Yonglee adds: "Knowledge of the educational, occupational, and economic background of the congregation, as well as their foundational faith orientations, is an important aspect of preaching. However, even more important than an awareness of listeners' educational or economic situations is an understanding of their historical, religious, and cultural background."

<sup>5</sup> Don M. Wardlaw, "Preaching as the Interface of Two Social Worlds," in *Preaching as a Social Act*, ed. Arthur Van Seters (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 62-65.

notes that “theological meaning is achieved through some images from human beings’ lives.”<sup>6</sup> Preachers’ sermons should not be detached from persons’ real lives. Paul is a person who drew metaphors and analogies from the lives and cultures of the people to whom he preached. Each congregation is rooted in a unique culture. As Roger E. Van Harn comments, “A sermon cannot be spoken or heard from outside the culture in which we live.”<sup>7</sup> Harn’s comment emphasizes the necessity of making a connection between the culture and the sermon. Therefore, example stories, which are windows to the core ideas of sermons, should be chosen according to their relevancy and applicability to the cultural context of the preacher’s congregation. Even though modern technology (air travel, computers/internet, Television, movies, books and magazine) narrows the gaps between cultures and countries, there are still many things that are not translatable from one context to another. Paul shows his faithfulness to the cultural context of a congregation in his illustrative running metaphor. Paul uses the image of athletes to explain how Christians should live their lives. If Paul had used this athletic metaphor in another congregation, his message would have lost its power to persuade his congregation. Paul knows that athletic competitions are one of the most interesting and exciting topics for the Corinthian congregation.

The marriage analogy also reflects Paul’s interest in his congregations’ cultures at the time he wrote. Paul references a Jewish law in order to develop his main argument. He highlights the freedom of a woman when her husband dies. The freedom which is given to a widow and her right to choose another man are concepts that are specifically meaningful to the mixed Roman congregation that receives Paul’s words. Paul applies the

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<sup>6</sup> David G. Buttrick, *Homiletic Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 132.

<sup>7</sup> Roger E. Van Harn, *Preacher, Can You Hear Us Listening?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 83-84.

congregation's cultural understandings regarding how one might marry twice to the spiritual idea of being freed from the law in order to belong to Christ.

In this regard, Rev. Samhwan Kim is in line with Paul in his emphasis on cultural faithfulness. Rev. Kim's example stories are a good model to follow because he often draws upon particular aspects or traditions of Korean culture for example stories for his sermons. As Rev. Kim suggests, army stories are particularly good sources for sermon illustrations, because all Koreans can connect with them in one way or another. Since Korea has a long history as a monoethnic culture, there are a lot of cultural stories that can be used in Korean congregations. These stories can be drawn from a variety of sources such as farming, army traditions, or old customs that have been transmitted to contemporary Koreans. Using cultural example stories opens doors for preachers to communicate on an emotional level with their congregations.

Although Rev. Dongwon Lee often uses foreign terms or stories from unfamiliar settings, he is able to hold the interest of his hearers who come from a variety of backgrounds. He seems to enjoy bringing an international flavor to his sermons by using stories from various cultures. This tendency of Rev. Lee's might serve to peek the interest of his hearers as they engage other cultures vicariously. Hearers are able to use their experiences and imagination to bridge the cultural divide.

#### Example Stories about Universal Principles

Third, Paul's metaphors and analogies also offer insights into unchanging universal truths or laws that every human being can recognize or agree with. This element is beyond cultures or nations or ethnicities or any kind of difference. The planting metaphor is one example of this. Paul directs his congregation to think as farmers who

plant and water a plant and watch it grow. However, the unchanging truth in this metaphor is not represented by the planting or the watering, but by the process of the plant's growth. Almost all human beings living anywhere in the world are familiar with the general concepts of planting and nurturing the growth of plants. Paul assumes that his congregation knows that there is something outside of human control that is involved in the growth of a plant. He recognizes that all human beings' endeavors, such as planting or watering plants, fail without a power to move them toward growth or fruition. Thus, Paul attributes this power to God. He draws upon an experience or process that is familiar to everyone – that of growing a plant – and then uses this connection to point to a spiritual truth – God is the source of persons' growth in faith.

There are a lot of example stories in this area that have been developed from preachers' observations. Some of the best illustrations for pointing to universal truths or laws would be drawn from natural phenomena such as the weather, the lives of animals and plants, and so on. These illustrations would be based on commonly held observations or known facts. Paul observed the processes of growing plants and making pottery. In the same way, preachers can develop countless ideas from observing their surroundings as Paul did. Behind many interesting phenomena lie truths that are now just a mystery to people. Rev. Kim's pine tree analogy and his story about the gnus of Masaimara in Africa can be included in this category.

One more thing to note is that example stories that draw on natural phenomenon can endow sermons with beautiful imagery that stirs the imagination and makes such sermons more appealing to contemporary people who are accustomed to colorful visual images.

### Example Stories Drawn from Preachers' Own Experiences

Preachers need to be very careful about telling stories in which they are the heroes. Such stories may become a form of boasting, pointing to a preacher's spiritual superiority and not to God's message. They can also betray the confidence of those who trust the preacher not to make things public.

In Paul's case, his self-revealing stories are utterly based in humility and dependence on Jesus Christ. When Paul references his experiences in his letters, he uses them as a defense against those who challenge or question his apostleship or ministry or as a means to glorify God and reveal God's grace and faithfulness. When Paul mentions his successful life in following Jesus Christ and says to "join in imitating me" (Phil. 3:17, NRSV), this serves as encouragement to his readers to live according to the life of Jesus Christ. At the end of his running metaphor, Paul refers to his struggle to live a purposive life. He says, "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air" (I Cor 9:26, NIV). Then Paul finishes his example story by saying, "No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

Paul's story about his experience is summed up in his modest confession about his weakness. He mentions that he is open to being disqualified from getting a prize, just like other believers. There is tension between pride and humility in Paul's self-revealing story, but, in the end, his congregants hear a humble confession. This demonstrates Paul's rhetorical power to persuade his congregation. His pride is focused on giving praise to God, who makes his accomplishments possible. His endeavors to imitate Jesus Christ are embedded in his written confessions about his experiences.

Eugene L. Lowry also recommends that preachers “bring data from [their] own experience.”<sup>8</sup> He emphasizes preachers including their own experiences in their sermons if they have had experiences that readily connect with the story of the sermon text.<sup>9</sup> Even if they cannot draw stories from their own lives, preachers need to actively look for stories about situations similar to that of the Scriptural text for the sermon. Lowry sees the reference of preachers to themselves as a positive element in their sermons.

A strong point of Rev. Kim’s sermons is his usage of his own experiences as example stories in his sermons. In this regard, he is following Paul’s example of self-revelation. Preachers, however, broaden their experiences through reading and can find appropriate and powerful stories that are not their own personal stories. Rev. Lee is much more dependent on stories from books or the news than from his own life.

The similarity of Paul and Rev. Kim in the types of personal stories they use is noteworthy. They both tend to tell stories about their trials or sufferings as they go about their ministerial work. Rev. Kim often tells stories about the struggles he had during a difficult period in the life of his church, just as Paul often reveals his struggles and sufferings in the process of evangelizing nonbelievers or in imitating Jesus Christ. Rev. Kim’s self-revealing example stories add power to his sermons, because these stories are tightly related to God’s grace in helping him and his ministry. He reveals God’s love and faithfulness toward faithful believers by sharing stories from his life. Additionally, Rev. Kim’s frankness makes his self-revealing stories valuable and meaningful to his listeners. He even goes so far as to reveal his wrongdoings and mistakes in deviating from God’s word. This can be a risky move for most Korean preachers to make because such

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<sup>8</sup> Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 109.

<sup>9</sup> Lowry, 109.

revelations might threaten their authority in their parishioners' eyes. However, Rev. Kim never excludes mistakes from his lists of his experiences. On the contrary, he sometimes emphasizes his mistakes or wrongdoings. In other words, Rev. Kim shows others his weaknesses. However, his confessions are always followed by tributes to God's grace and power to help him. Paul's and Rev. Kim's self-confessions eventually have the common purpose of glorifying God, who works through weak human beings.

Some Korean preachers have a preconception that they should not talk about themselves in their sermons, because they regard preachers' self-revealing as violating the authority of a sermon. Thus, example stories about the preachers themselves are rarely used by those coming from this conservative position on preaching. As Ronald J. Allen says, "Many people attribute the authority of preaching to the preacher's use of scripture."<sup>10</sup> This is true, not only in the U.S., but also in Korea. However, preachers' self-revealing example stories can help preachers be more authoritative if they use them in the right ways. They can strengthen preachers' messages. In addition, congregants are interested in preachers' lives and practices as role models for their personal faith journey. Congregation members want their pastor to live according to God's words and want to be able to learn from and witness authenticity of the pastor's spiritual life.

Preachers who live as role models for morality and devotion to God are decisive for whether or not people will listen and respond to the preachers' sermons. In some cases, congregations are eager to know how their pastors have recovered from serious difficulties that have occurred in the processes of their ministries. Congregants can also sometimes find clues for solving their personal problems by listening to preachers' stories

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Alice Muligan, Diane Tuner-Sharazz, and Dawn Ottoni Wibelm, *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2005), 21.

about their own experiences. As Kathy Black says, “Preachers are called to help individuals interpret aspects of their personal lives from the perspectives of the gospel.”<sup>11</sup> Even though preachers and congregants have different experiences, they can relate to one another in how God is involved in their diverse problems. Thus, preachers’ references to their experiences through example stories can be beneficial if they are used in an appropriate manner.

### Example Stories Created for Preachers’ Specific Purposes

Paul’s metaphors, such as his planting metaphor, suggest the possibility of preachers devising their own example stories when necessary. Example stories are not necessarily factual occurrences or obvious truths. Meaningful example stories can be constructed based on events which could actually occur in persons’ lives. Preachers can develop hypothetical stories about topics that congregational members will be able to relate to and understand. As a seamstress can design clothes to fit a customer’s body size, so can preachers design stories to fit the purposes of their sermons. However, preachers need to exercise discretion in constructing their own stories. Only when they find it difficult to come up with an appropriate example story for a particular topic, point, or argument they should set out to create their own story.

There can be some guidelines for creating example stories. First, created example stories need to be reasonable. Those should be understandable for every congregation member. Second, created example stories need to be probable. Third, created example stories are also regarded as an hypothesized story. Preachers should let their congregation members know the story is a created example story before it is said. If these guidelines

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<sup>11</sup> Kathy Black, “Preaching on a Personal Issue,” in *Patterns of Preaching*, ed. Ronald J. Allen (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1998), 190.



are well observed by preachers, they can function to highlight the preachers' argument.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Example stories can be the most important element of successful communication between the preacher and the congregation. To pursue good preaching is to pursue good example stories. Some of Paul's metaphors and analogies in I Corinthians and Romans offer insights into the range of ideas and sources that Paul used. Even though Paul uses short, metaphorical or analogical stories that just give an image or a simple idea, Paul achieves his goal in conveying his messages.

In the marriage analogy, Paul uses present tense proclamation to describe the freedom that is now available to the faith community. In order to do this, Paul frames his argument in terms of death and life. To make this framework more intelligent, Paul draws an example from Jewish law of the freedom a woman has after the death of her first husband.

With the pottery metaphor, Paul uses metaphor familiar to his congregation. Many of the members of the Roman congregation were Jewish, so the concept of God molding persons out of clay or dirt is a familiar and comfortable one to them, since it is found in several places in the Hebrew Bible. However, this pottery story also made sense to Gentile believers, because they were acquainted with the process of making objects from clay, and they could conceptualize the idea of a potter having authority over the clay being molded into a pot. Through imaginative extension of the pottery metaphor, Paul is able to utilize this familiar process to create a persuasive example stories.

The planting metaphor has two characteristics of homiletic value. Paul develops this story based on common understanding of natural phenomenon. What is significant is

that Paul intentionally constructs this story so that it demonstrates the importance of God's role in producing growth as well as the importance of cooperative activity of those who work in the field.

The running metaphor represents Paul's sensitivity to the cultural context of the people he addresses. Paul draws upon his congregation's familiarity with the athletic competitions that were popular at that time to make a point about living a Christian life. Through this metaphor, Paul also shows that it is possible for preachers to appropriately share their experiences in their sermons. Such self-revelations are effective if preachers are humble in their approach and use their experiences to demonstrate God's love, grace, and faithfulness, even in the face of human weaknesses and shortcomings (including the preacher's).

Samhwan Kim, a senior pastor of Myungsung Presbyterian Church, is famous for his preaching. Rev. Kim's sermons are captivating; he draws his listeners in so that they are able to grasp the meaning of his messages at an affective level.

Rev. Kim's example stories fall into four categories: (1) Biblical stories; (2) episodes or events drawn from his own life and ministerial experiences; (3) stories related to Korean traditions and culture; and (4) stories that draw out truths or principles from natural phenomena.

Dongwon Lee, a senior pastor of the Ziguchon Church, is regarded as the most influential preacher in Korea. He is very conscientious about the logical development of his sermons, following the typical Korean preaching framework of having three main points under one main topic. He often begins his sermons with a story and ends them with a story. He is an excellent storyteller, and his example stories are selected and told in

such a way that they clearly support the case he is seeking to make in each sermon. Rev. Lee also challenges his listeners to think about the theme of his sermon with him and to envision a solution to the problem he has posed. The example stories Rev. Lee uses have five distinctive characteristics: (1) They primarily come from books he has read. (2) They are often biographical accounts focused on one incident in a famous person's life. (3) They include direct quotes and dialogue. (4) They usually include a dramatic reversal or unexpected conclusion. (5) Many of the stories are drawn from recent events.

Paul's metaphors and analogies offer some criteria for contemporary Korean preachers to follow in designing and selecting example stories for their sermons: (1) Clear and short example stories with one distinct image are best. (2) Use example stories that are relevant to the cultural context of the people to whom one is preaching. (3) Choose example stories that reveal universal principles (4) Share stories from one's own life experiences. (5) Develop or create one's own illustrations to fit one's purposes when necessary.

## Appendix

Sermon for September 10, 2006

### Thorn in the Flesh

II Cor. 12: 7-10

When one visits the Chehel-Sotun Palace in Iran, one is moved by its beauty. The reason is that this palace is decorated with broken pieces of mirrors that sparkle like diamonds from the entrance to the roof. The mirror mosaics on the walls of this building create various colors according to the intensity and direction of the light shining on them. The most remarkable thing about this palace is the story of how these mirror mosaics came to decorate its walls. This beautiful display was created out of broken mirrors and an unsuccessful life.

At the time of the building of the Chehel-Sotun Palace, many architects ordered semitransparent mirrors from France to decorate it. Finally, after a few months, the ordered mirrors arrived, but they were completely broken. The people involved were angry and demanded that France send another batch of mirrors. At this time, one person suggested a different idea that involved using these broken and seemingly useless mirrors. Others accepted this idea because otherwise, they would have to wait several months to get new mirrors. This man asked the workers to break the mirrors into smaller pieces and to attach them to the building. The people watching this process were surprised at the marvelous light created by the broken mirrors. Broken mirrors were used to bring about unexpected results. Even more interesting is the identity of the man who suggested this surprising idea. He was an apprentice of the building company. He remembered his past career as a tailor with a small tailoring shop. He began his business in Tehran, but it did

not go well. So, he made some blankets and clothes from some scrap pieces left over from cutting cloth. He suggested the idea of using the broken mirrors based on his recollections of the beauty of creating products from leftover pieces of cloth.

Dear church members! God sometimes achieves great things through the scraps of our lives. God works through the failures in our lives. Apostle Paul is an example of a person God worked with in this way. The text reading for today demonstrates this principle. Paul experienced unbearable suffering that he called a thorn in his flesh. This suffering was enough to cause Paul to fail in his life and to give up his apostleship. However, God achieves God's goals by working through this painful thing in Paul's life.

The "thorn in the flesh" is one of a few mysteries we find in the scriptures. Many New Testament scholars have studied this topic, but they have not reached any agreement concerning what it means. Speculations about the identity of the thorn in the flesh are various. Some possibilities include: an eye disease, a serious headache, epilepsy, or an endemic disease. Some scholars argue that the thorn is a physical disability, such as infantile paralysis. This theory is supported by Paul's confession in Galatians 4:13-14. Paul said, "As you know, it was because of illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you welcomed me as if I was an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself." However, some scholars argue that the thorn in the flesh refers to Paul's antagonists, like the Jews who incessantly oppose Paul's ministry or theology. According to some scholars, the evidence for this lies in the Greek word, *aggelos*, which means messenger, designating a person rather than a disease, a translation supported by other usages of the word in the New Testament. I think this new argument

has some credibility, because Paul had a hard time in his ministry due to opposition from some Jews. What do you think about the identity of Paul's thorn in the flesh?

Regardless of what Paul's thorn in the flesh is, the obvious thing is that Paul had experienced serious suffering because of this thorn in the flesh. Thus, Paul desperately prayed about this. It is better to read again verse eight. "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me." Three times means that Paul did his best to pray for God to remove his suffering. Why do you think God refused Paul's desperate appeal for relief? Why? I want to share with you concerning the reason for God's denial of Paul's prayer request. The reason for this is to make Paul a humble servant of God. In verse seven, Paul twice states that God gave him a thorn in the flesh. Paul says that the reason for his thorn is because he was becoming excessively proud about the revelations he had received. But, who gave these revelations to him? That's right, God. God gave Paul marvelous revelations, some mystical experiences. However, after that, God realized that these wonderful spiritual blessings might become stumbling blocks for Paul, even though God's intentions in bestowing these experiences were good.

Dear brothers and sisters, how many of you, as church members, become proud? People readily become pompous due to their possessions, social positions, and so on. Haughtiness sometimes makes the children of God rotten. However, Paul was a really humble servant. He tried to live his life in imitation of Jesus Christ. Paul did not marry, had no family, and had no comfortable place to stay for a long period of time. After Paul encountered Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he lived just for the gospel and Jesus Christ. Paul never regretted his life. Nevertheless, God wanted him to be much more humble. Paul earned his living by making tents, so people would not question his

intentions when he asked for money. If he was really proud, he never lived his life in such a way. For Paul, Jesus Christ, who lived a humble life and finally died on the cross, was his role model. Paul sacrificed his life for the sake of the gospel.

Nonetheless, God permitted Paul to experience a thorn in the flesh. God wanted Paul to become humble to the utmost degree. By experiencing this suffering, Paul finally became the great servant of God that God really wanted.

God loves modest persons and offers a hand of grace to them. Or, God makes God's children humble in order to use them as his servants. Thus, in Proverbs 3:34, "He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble." And in I Peter 5:5-6, Peter says, "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

My dear church members! God loves people who lower themselves, and God wants to work with these people. We have already been saved by our faith in Jesus Christ. But, the ground of faith is humility. Humility makes our faith grow. Then, what is the content of this humility? Humility is to confess ourselves as sinners before God. Humility is to recognize God's grace for us and to submit ourselves to God, because we do not deserve to be saved according to our own endeavors or deeds.

There is a story about a person who was waiting in front of the gate of heaven. He is a person who devoted his life to serving his church and society. By and by, an angel stops and says to him, "Wait, if you want to enter into heaven through this gate, the points you have received for your life should equal one hundred. Otherwise, you will not



be able to pass through this gate. Can you tell me about some things you have done which can be evaluated to get points?" After pondering his life for a few minutes, the man replies, "I have served at one church doing a lot of good works for thirty years." The angel responds, "Really? You get one point." The man, surprised to hear this, exclaims, "What? Only one point? Absurd! Okay. I have some more valuable things to say. I am head of a family. After marrying my wife, I lived with her for forty years without any serious problems, we had children together, and I became a pastor and a professor who is respected by others. So, my family members were always happy." The angel replies, "Good, you're a great person. These days, there are not many people like you. You can get two points." "What? Two points? Unbelievable! I don't understand how you're evaluating me." He becomes nervous, because he needs to get one hundred points. Then he continues, "I never missed the Sunday service for six years, attended the early prayer meeting almost every day, and led a Bible study group." "Really? You excel in every way. You can get one point." Hearing this from the angel, the man feels desperate. He says, "I have nothing to add to get more points." As soon as he said this, he burst into tears and cried, "Oh, God! What should I do? What can I do? I might not be a person who can be with you. Please, forgive me, please. The only person who can let me in is you, my Lord." The man examines his life, and for the first time, he confesses his sins and pride before God, asking God for God's grace. When the angel sees the man crying before her, the angel approaches him and says, "You finally get one hundred points. Now you can pass through this gate."

Humility is the best way to be saved by Jesus Christ, because it makes human beings confess their sinfulness before God. Humility is not just a virtue, but a way of

receiving God's grace. Only humble persons can confess their sins. Thus, there might be no one who enters into the kingdom of heaven without feeling his or her sinfulness. Thus, the Bible says in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We should not be proud of our achievements, regarding them as the result of our own endeavors. We have nothing to be proud of ourselves. We should just focus on Jesus Christ accepting us as we are. We cannot be separate from God's support and grace for us. Therefore, we should be proud of Jesus Christ and the cross. The cross is a symbol representing Jesus' humility before human beings.

God sometimes permit us suffering in order to makes us humble. However, this is strong evidence of God's love toward us, so we should see God's considerate and kind mind for us. Once, I visited a cafeteria and ordered tea. Surprisingly, there are a few leaves on the surface of the tea. The leaves made it uncomfortable for me to drink my tea, but I realized that these were planned for guests to drink their tea slowly and tastefully. These leaves let me protect my tongue from the hot tea by drinking slowly and smelling the fragrance created from them. The thorn in the flesh in Paul is like these leaves. As the host of the cafeteria put these unwelcoming leaves into the tea, God put suffering into our lives to achieve God's goals which guide our lives to maturity. I hope that you can confess and praise God's grace even though you confront some kind of suffering in your life.

Secondly, God permitted Paul a thorn in the flesh in order for Paul to recognize the meaning of the cross of Christ deeply. Paul expresses in v.7, "to torment me" written in Greek, colapije. This word colapije originally means to strike with the fist in some

other NT texts. Surprisingly, the character who strikes with the fist is God. Paul confesses as if our loving God hits him with his fist. The more important observation on this word lies in its appearance in Mark 14:65 written as “Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy! " And the guards took him and beat him.” The words, ‘struck,’ which is used to describe this shameful scene on the cross is also used in Paul’s suffering. Paul might recollect Jesus Christ on the cross whenever he suffers through this thorn in the flesh. Paul might feel how Jesus felt suffering on the cross whenever his suffering, the thorn in the flesh afflicts him. Paul might feel that it is absurd for innocent Jesus Christ to suffer severely on the cross whenever he suffers from the thorn in the flesh. Paul’s suffering eventually leads him to Jesus Christ’s grace, love and salvation. God wants Paul to proclaim the gospel through Jesus Christ on the cross not by his lips but by his heart. Paul can proclaim Jesus Christ with assurance and strength through his experience of suffering, his thorn in the flesh. The suffering you experience can lead you to realize the meaning of Jesus Christ’s passion on the cross. Suffering can be a blessing in this sense.

Lovely church members! If you have some serious problem causing you trouble, see the cross of Jesus Christ and don’t lose heart. The thorn in the flesh you have will finally lead to a glorious result in your life. The thorn in the flesh you are experiencing will be a great gift which makes you feel the great love of Jesus Christ. See the victorious Jesus Christ who overcomes suffering whenever you are in trouble. Then, your grief will change into great joy. Your complaining words will change into words of thanks.

Thirdly, God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh in order for Paul to realize God’s being achieved though a weak and shameful thing. Paul mentions the word, “boast” a few

times and confesses that I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses in v. 9. By the way, what does Paul want to boast about? In other words, what is the content of his boasting? Is that his apostleship? Is that his power of preaching? Is that his power of healing? Is that his great knowledge about the Jewish law? Is that his ability to found many churches? Absolutely not. I recommend you read again v.9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." Paul mentions that he boasts of his weakness. Paul continues to say in v.10, "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." The greatness of Paul is shown in this confession. This cannot be understood with our common senses. Who would like to boast about his weakness? Who does reveal his weakness and shameful things? Human beings try to hide their weaknesses and shameful things. However, here is the great person, Paul, mentioning that he is boasting about his shameful weaknesses. Paul realizes that God's grace is toward the person who confesses his/her weakness rather than confessing his/her strong points. Lovely church members! If you boast about your knowledge, possessions, social positions or health, the grace of God will never be in you. If you boast about your power and rely on yourself, God will leave you. God never works his power within you. Regardless of your conditions and your ability, God will be with you when you become completely weak and say "I am weak." This is the paradox of our belief in Christianity. The Bible says in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Paul confesses in v.10 “That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.” Paul delights in his past experiences which seem to be shameful because he recognizes God’s work through those shameful things. Is there a shameful secret or experience in your life? That is God’s way to make you mature in faith. It can be evidence of God’s love toward you. Paul already mentions that God will be with the weak in the faith community. In I Cor 12:22-23, Paul says, “On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty.” Paul respects the less honorable people regarding them as having important roles and potentials.

There is a woman who sells bread and dumplings in a covered wagon on the market street. On a rainy day, this woman hastens to close her shabby wagon in order to bring an umbrella to her daughter studying in art school. When she arrives at the gate of her daughter’s art school, she sees her old slippers and dirty clothes smudged with dough from the wheat flour. At that moment, this woman’s eye meets her daughter’s eye. Her daughter moves her head up and down a few times. This woman suddenly turns away dropping the umbrella thinking that her daughter feels shame for her shabby appearance. One month later, the mother receives an invitation card from the art school of her daughter. She finally decides to go to her daughter’s art school again after hesitating. When she arrived at this school and sees her daughter’s painting, she burst into tears. In her daughter’s painting, there is one woman carrying an umbrella with this title, “The most beautiful woman in the world, my mother.” The daughter nodded her head to draw a picture of her mother on that rainy day. God loves you as you are embracing all of your

shameful things. Today, I want you to hear Paul's voice, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

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